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William B. Cairns Collection

of

American Women Writers

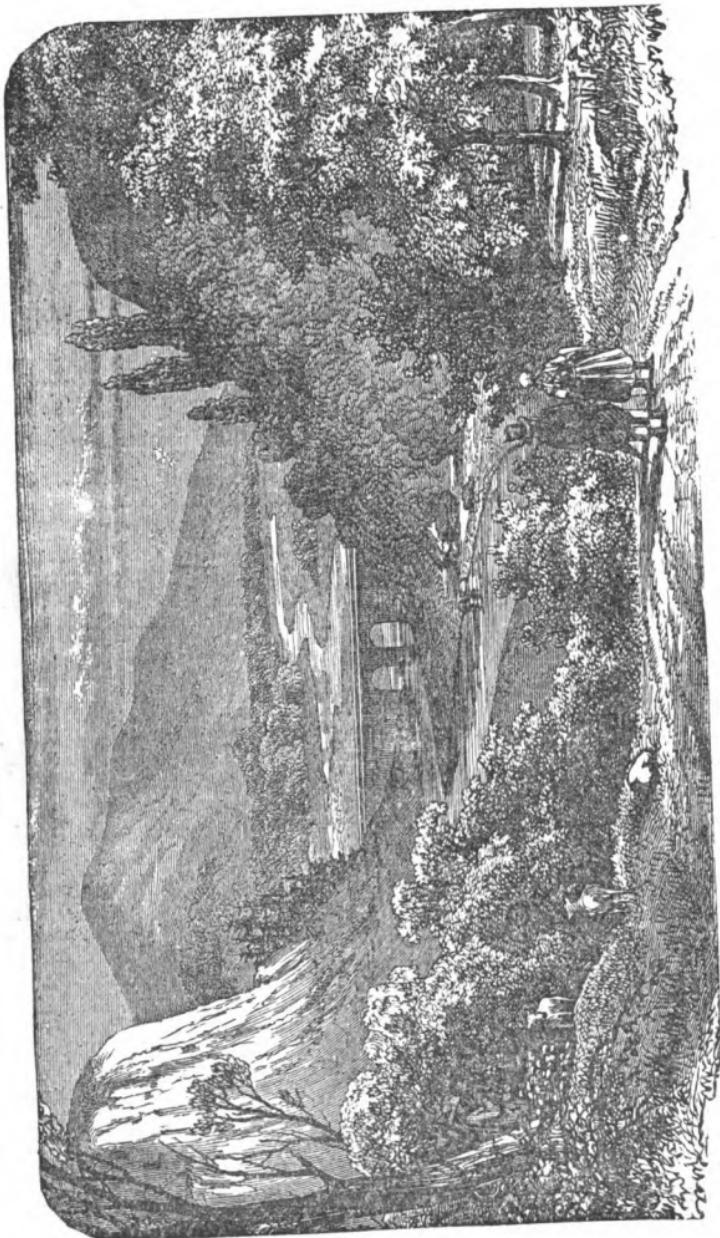
1630 - 1900



William B. Cairns

Professor of English

University of Wisconsin-Madison



MEETING OF THE WATERS.—(Frontispiece.)

ELINOR PRESTON.

By Mrs. J. Sadlier.



After awhile the book dropped from my hand, and, dreaming of the past, I fell into a gentle slumber.—Page 268.

NEW YORK:
D. & J. SADLIER & CO.

ELINOR PRESTON:

OR,

Scenes at Home and Abroad.

MRS. J. SADLIER,

Author of

"THE BLAKES AND FLANIGANS," "CONFEDERATE CHIEFTAINS," "NEW BIGGINS,
"WILLY BURKE," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK:

D. & J. SADLIER & CO., 81 BARCLAY STREET,

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In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York**

To my friends in Canada.

To the friends of other days, far away in that Northern clime where hearts are warm and skies are cold, where so many of my years were spent, that it stands in memory side by side with the land of my nativity.

To the *many* all over Canada whom I saw, some but seldom, some not at all, yet whose sympathy was with me as mine was with them.

To the *few* whose society made life sweet—with whom I had so much in common—whose friendship I so highly prize, whose kindness I cannot forget Over some the grave has already closed, I shall see them no more this side eternity; but their memory is unforgotten.

To my *first* friends and my *last* friends, beyond the St. Lawrence, I dedicate ELINOR PRESTON. I know they will prize the book for my sake, as I do the name of CANADA for theirs.

NEW YORK, April, 1861.

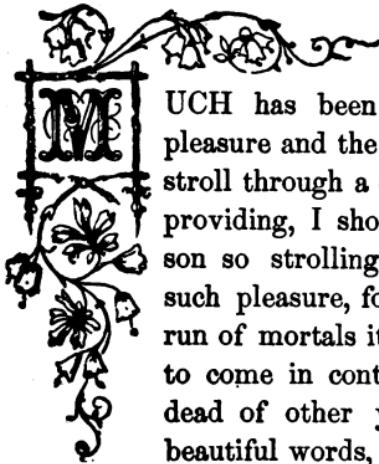
ELINOR PRESTON;

OR,

Scenes at Home and Abroad.

CHAPTER I.

[Even as Elinor Preston's manuscript fell into the hands of the anonymous gentleman who wrote the following introduction, so did his manuscript fall into mine, by an equally fortunate chance; and, such being the case, I have great pleasure in giving it to the public just as I found it.]



MUCH has been said and written of the pleasure and the profit to be derived from a stroll through a country churchyard, always providing, I should suppose, that the person so strolling be capable of enjoying such pleasure, for assuredly to the average run of mortals it is anything but agreeable to come in contact with the dead. "The dead of other years" solemn and most beautiful words, little regarded by the children of the world, the living occupants of this our planet. Much, as I said, has been written on the solemn lessons

inculcated by the grassy heaps and neglected monuments of the graveyard, and this applies to all, for man does the progress of man's return to dust go on from day to day in fulfilment of the divine behest. But it is only in Catholic graveyards that real consolation is to be found, for there we feel that the dead are not wholly separated from those left behind. There the gulf of death is bridged across by the hand of faith. We read the pious inscriptions : "In your charity pray for the soul of _____," and though the name on the head-stone or head-board is strange to us, yet we do pray for that soul with a heart full of tender, Christian charity. Over the next grave we read : "Erected to the memory of _____ and _____ by their sorrowing and affectionate children. They were, indeed, Christian parents. May they rest in peace!" Does not the "Amen" which one's lips utter, ascend to heaven on the wings of faith and charity ? Over many of the graves is placed only a simple cross of wood or stone, sublimely attesting the faith and hope of the Christian who sleeps beneath its sacred shadow. What monument ever raised by wealth and pride could equal that in grandeur ! "In this sign we conquer !" whispers the interior voice—the voice of faith.

I was forcibly struck with these truths, while rambling one summer afternoon through the neatly-kept enclosure of a parish cemetery in Lower Canada, within sight of the blue waters of the St. Lawrence. The names on the simple monuments were nearly all French ; they were Breton and Norman names, transmitted from

one generation to another by the brave and hardy colonists, who also gave intact to their children "the faith, pure and undefiled," which, in later times, animated the bold peasants of that same Bretagne and that same Normandy to fight as men hardly ever fought in defence of their religion.

The declining sun shed his slanting beams on the grass-grown graves, flinging the shadow of cross and headstone in broken lines over each "narrow house of death," and I was thinking of the light of immortality with which those Christian sleepers had been long since vested as with a garment, when my eye chanced to fall on a small headstone, apparently of white marble, standing in a corner close by the little parish church, in the shade of an ancient elm. Attracted from a distance by the picturesque appearance of this little monument, I approached, and, to my surprise, found on it no inscription—nothing but a cross, and a miniature figure of the Blessed Virgin, with her hands outstretched as we see her on the medals of the Immaculate Conception. I looked at the grave: it was that of an adult, judging by its length; and involuntarily I stopped, and began to think why it was that there was no name on the stone. Many efforts did I make to solve the enigma, but having no clue to guide me, I was of course lost in the labyrinth of my own thoughts,—and roused myself, after half an hour's musing, to discover that the nameless grave, its sheltering elm, and myself, were alike enveloped in the deep shade of the sacred building, behind which the sun was now setting.

Finding that I had lingered in the cemetery much longer than I had intended, I entered the church to say a prayer for the faithful departed, especially those amongst whose mortal remains I had been so long musing, and then hurried to "mine inn" to procure some of those creature-comforts, for which, after all, intellectual or sentimental pleasures are but a sorry substitute. After supper I walked out on the little gallery, or verandah, which ran along the front of the house, and was well pleased to find mine host there before me, in his shirt-sleeves, enjoying his pipe and the delicious coolness of the summer eve,—his dark, Indian-like features shaded by a straw hat of the coarsest texture, plaited by the nut-brown hands of wife or daughter.

I was fortunately able to converse with Monsieur Jean Baptiste in his own liquid tongue, on which account he had the greatest possible pleasure in answering any questions I might choose to put.

"You have quite a pretty village here," said I, casting my eyes over the picturesque group of quaint, old-fashioned, gaudily-painted houses, shaded here and there with the luxuriant foliage of the maple and the tamarac.

"The place is well enough," said mine host, with the careless air of one who was himself perfectly satisfied with his location, and cared little whether others admired it or not.

"And your church and presbytery," I said, pointing to the buildings in question, where they stood side by side, their white walls reflecting the rays of the summer moon, as she rose from behind the dark rim of the

adjacent forest. "How graceful does the pretty cottage nestle close by the church!—surely, if peace is to be had on earth, it must be in this secluded spot!"

"That is just what Ma'amselle used to say when she came first," observed the landlord.

"Mademoiselle! who is she?"

"Why, Ma'amselle l'Anglaise, to be sure," he returned, as though I should have known all about her as well as himself.

"L'Anglaise!" I repeated. "So you have a young English lady here?"

"No, sir, she is not here now—she is gone to a better place," and he reverently touched his straw hat, and glanced upward to the dark blue sky spangled with its myriad orbs.

"Oh! she is dead, then!" Jean Baptiste nodded in the affirmative, and I involuntarily thought of the nameless grave under the churchyard elm.

"Is your demoiselle Anglaise buried below in the churchyard, close by the wall under a large tree?"

Mine host looked surprised! "Monsieur has seen her grave, then?" I nodded in my turn. "Yes," he said, "that is where she lies—may she rest in peace!"

"What was her name?" I asked.

"I am sorry I cannot tell you, sir," said the urbane landlord, as he shook the ashes from his pipe, and leisurely put it in his pocket; "we always call her Ma'amselle, because she was a lady, and the only one in the village. I heard Monsieur le Curé sometimes mention her name, for he speaks English as well as can be; but

poor people like us, that don't speak English, can't well remember English names. As I was saying, we always call her Ma'amselle, and she didn't want any other name given her. You see there is none on her head stone. Well, that was her own wish."

"Strange," I said musingly; "but had she no friends?"

"Not a soul—at least here. I don't know if she ever had any. I suppose she had in her own country, but she came here all alone, for all the world as though she dropped down from heaven to teach our little ones. Where she came from, or who she was, we never knew, because, as Monsieur knows, we couldn't be putting questions to a lady like her. She might have told Monsieur le Curé something, but if she did he kept it all to himself."

"So she taught school here?"

"Yes, sir, she taught both French and English. Monsieur le Curé said she was very well instructed, and she looked like it. She was pale, and had a spiritual sort of look about her that nobody ever had, I think, but herself—at least there was nobody in these parts a bit like her, not even in Quebec, or Montreal itself,—and I have been in both, sir, many a time. I never saw a face like hers—so sad, and yet so sweet. Every body loved her, sir," and the worthy *habitan* cleared his throat vociferously; "there's my wife Adèle, and I do believe she could have worked day and night for her, and for the matter of that, she often did too, after she got sick, for Adèle has an excellent heart, sir, and the good God gives her the best o' health."

"I rejoice to hear it," I said, with becoming gravity, but, pray, where did Mademoiselle reside?"

"Oh! in the school-house yonder," pointing to a long, low, steep-roofed house, with even more than the usual number of Canadian windows, opening on hinges almost to the floor. "She would have been heartily welcome to live with us here, but she thought she'd rather be to herself—so she told my woman; and she took old Mother Longpré and her daughter Laure, to keep her company and mind the house, for it seems she did not know any thing. Poor Ma'amselle!" and again the good man cleared his throat, and wiped away a starting tear!—"I'm sure we'll all pray for her the longest day we have to live!"

"I should like to ask the priest," I said, "whether he knew any thing of her history."

"Perhaps Monsieur is from the same country?"

"I hardly think so, friend, as you say the young lady was English. I shall, however, pay a visit to the priest to-morrow, and—"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted Jean Baptiste, "but I forgot to tell you that after Ma'amselle's death, old Mother Longpré gave Monsieur le Curé a great bundle of papers that she found in a desk in her own room. You may find some thing in *them*."

This made me still more anxious to visit the priest, and so taking my hat I walked down the street in the direction of the presbytery, hoping that some lucky chance would give me an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity. And so, indeed, it happened, for, as I drew

near his house, I perceived the good pastor seated under the portico, in a large arm-chair, with his clasped hands resting on his knees, and his eyes fixed with a thoughtful, dreamy look on the silvery track of the moonlight stretching far and away over the broad river. Unwilling to disturb such tranquil repose, I made a turn or two up and down the street in front of the house, making a short pause each time as I passed, and succeeded at last in catching the good priest's eye. He immediately left his seat, and bowed with the easy grace so characteristic of the genuine French Canadian. Having made ourselves mutually acquainted, we were soon engaged in a familiar chat, cosily seated at an open window of the priest's little parlor. Our conversation was in English, which Mr. Lacroix seemed to know very well in theory, though his tongue made sad work of some of its peculiar sounds. Still he would persist in speaking it, being glad, as he told me, of the opportunity, "for," said he, "English is to me as much a dead language, at the present time, as either Greek or Hebrew. I am glad to speak it with you, sir, for I fear to forget it altogether. I think I could not speak it now, were it not for a young lady who taught my school. She was from Ireland—I suppose Monsieur knows Ireland?" He paused, and I replied with a smile:

"I should, I think I ought to know it, inasmuch as it is my own country."

"Ah, indeed! then Monsieur is a compatriot—I mean a countryman of my good young friend. Her name was Preston—Mademoiselle Elinor Preston."

"Preston!" I repeated; "why, there is a noble family of that name in Ireland—and I have never known any of the name who were not of good standing."

"Standing?" inquired the priest.

"I mean," said I, in explanation, "that it is what we call a respectable name."

"Ah! I understand; and this young lady—Miss Preston—*was* most respectable—every way respectable," pronouncing the adjective with marked emphasis, and in the purest French; for words like this, which are the same in both languages, are invariably spoken in the mother tongue. "She was an honor to her country, sir; and her death, which took place a year ago, was a great loss to us—a very great loss, I assure you."

I then expressed my desire to know something about the young lady, and how it was that she came to settle down in a place so remote, where even her own language was not spoken.

"Ah!" said the good priest, "that is what I hardly know myself: some things she told me, but they are too long to tell, and Monsieur can have the story in her own words. I think it was a childish fancy made her settle here, but I don't know. It is all here, I suppose!" and going to a venerable-looking escrutoire, in a corner of the room, he drew forth a roll of papers already somewhat discolored by the hand of time. This he gave to me, saying: "I have looked them over, and I know there is no family or personal secret in question—so you may have them to read."

Thanking the good priest, I asked: "Was the lady young?"

"Not very: she might have been thirty or thereabouts when she came to us, and she was here five years. She looked even older, because of her grave and pensive aspect."

Declining the refreshments offered by the priest, notwithstanding the tempting neatness of the aged housekeeper who brought in the tray, I bade good-night to my new acquaintance, and, leaving him to read his Office, hastened to the privacy of my chamber in the little hosterie, there to learn the story of the dead from her own simple words, written in that small running hand, easy, light, and graceful, which we somehow connect in our minds with white taper fingers.

Elinor Preston.

"What a strange, weird thing is life!" began the manuscript; "who can penetrate its secrets, who unravel its tangled web? A solemn fact it is, with the past and the future ever mingling, yet never mingled, and the frail creature suspended by that filmy thread above the unfathomable ocean of eternity!" It has been said that "there is a tide in the affairs of men," and who can doubt it? The Christian and the unbeliever are alike hurried on by this resistless tide, towards the goal of death, the only difference being that the latter struggles and plunges, and grasps at every twig that may retard his pro-

ress, while the former floats calmly on towards the eternal bourne beyond which lies his home in the everlasting mansions.

Yet, even to the calm, unworldly Christian nothing fearing, nothing doubting, but leaving all in the hands of divine Providence, this life is full of mystery. Who can account for the train of circumstances that brought me here?—here, “in the forests of the West,” where but few generations have passed away since the Indian built his wigwam and launched his bark canoe, sole master of the land and the mighty river? Yet here I am. I—the daughter of a race who were knights and nobles in the Old World, before the veil was uplifted from the New! Truly the tide aforesaid has been playing strange pranks with Elinor Preston, but it certainly has *not* led her on to fortune. Fortune, indeed!—what care I for fortune? I flung it from me when I had it within my grasp, nor do I now regret it. Much have I lost that I do regret, and shall ever regret while life is left me. A golden circle of loving hearts have I seen shattered and melted down in the crucible of time. I myself am the only link remaining in this nether world, and my heart is the sole earthly repository of the loves and hopes and fears that made up the lives of all.

Here I am, alone: alone in the midst of my fellow-creatures—a mystery to all around me. Lonely I am, but not desolate, for my heart is full of faith in the divine promises, and the villagers, among whom my wayward fate has cast me, are guileless as our first parents in their pristine state, and kind as love and pity could

make them. They do not treat me as a stranger, and their artless confidence wins my heart. Although differing in almost every thing from my own people, there is still one sacred bond of union between us—one broad platform on which we stand side by side; it is the bond of faith, the platform of Catholicity. So I am not a stranger here—be still, sad, yearning heart!—I am not a stranger where I can pray with all the people, and be nourished with the sacraments, whose fruits are visible in the calm bright current of their peaceful life. I, too, have found peace in this secluded spot, peace which I had sought in vain amid the glare and glitter of more polished society. There are moments when I can smile at the contrast between the gay and perhaps brilliant Elinor Preston, a few years since

“——the favor'd guest
In many a lighted hall,”

the dispenser of fashion to an admiring circle—and not small—of country *elegants*, the sun of a nice little solar system. The metamorphosis is complete. The flight of years—few but heavy-laden with sorrow and reverse—has crushed the buoyant spirit and withered the roseate cheek, and dimmed the sparkling eye of the ball-room belle; and I sit as demurely, day after day, hammering the alphabet into thick little skulls, as though I had been all my life a “school-ma'am,” as a female teacher is, oddly-enough, called in the neighboring Republic.

But why all this? why do I find myself, pen in hand, putting my retrospective fancies on paper? Who shall

read them ? who, in all this vast region, will ever be interested in the reminiscences of a being so utterly isolated—a branch lopped off from the parent tree, or rather left to mourn its fall, and flung by the capricious wind of fate to the opposite side of the globe ? No matter, though there be none to read ; it will fill up many an hour that would hang heavy on my hands, and if, as I sometimes think, the disease that carried off my mother in the bloom of life has already commenced its ravages on my attenuated frame, then this scroll shall remain—sole relic of my thirty years' sojourn in this vale of tears. Some wanderer from my own loved land may chance to stumble on my papers when I have passed from this world, even some one who knew me in those early years, now clear and bright before my mental vision as the mountains of green Erin in the morning sun. So with this *will-o'-the-wisp* to guide me, I will glance briefly over the past.

I am the last of all my family. Parents, and brothers, and sisters, nay, even uncles and aunts, have all disappeared in the waves of time,—Heaven rest their souls in mercy ! And yet I am not old, that is, not *very* old, although I used to think *thirty* a good round age, and perhaps it is, too, in the present curtailed duration of human life. My father was a member of the Irish bar, and, though by no means distinguished in his profession, was, nevertheless, universally respected for honesty and integrity. Strictly honorable in his dealings with all men, and quite willing to assist the needy when he had it in his power, he had many friends, and few or no ene-

mies. He was, indeed, one of those good, easy men who seem to glide as smoothly through the world as though it had neither rocks nor shoals. My mother was of a different temperament. Endowed with very uncommon powers of mind, her sensibility was most acute, and the trials and troubles which passed so lightly over my father's head, fell on her heart with crushing weight. Her mind was too highly-wrought, her aspirations too lofty, and her standard of excellence too high, for the average run of society, and the consequence was that she involuntarily shrank from the world,—and the world soon found that out, and set my dear mother down as a very unsocial sort of person, because, forsooth! she could not bring herself down to *its* level, and do and say just what it bade her. There were among our visitors—chiefly my father's professional friends—some few who could and did appreciate my mother, and were in turn revered and esteemed by her. One of these was an elderly gentleman, of large and massive frame, finely-formed head, and a countenance at once expressive of piercing intellect, and keen, shrewd, caustic humor. He had a voice like a stentor, and an eye like a hawk. There was another—the direct opposite of the gentleman just described—who was, like him, a fast and firm friend of my mother's. He was a small man, a very small man, indeed, with a head so much too large for his body that it gave him a dwarfish look. Yet his countenance was one that attracted the beholder, not from the beauty of feature or color, but because of the fire which darted from his eye,—the fire of genius and of inspiration. In

my earlier days these two individuals were on the most friendly terms, but there came a time when they were worse than strangers, so that no one thought of inviting them to the same table. Years and years had they labored together in a great work—a work of more than national importance ; but the strife of politics grew up between them, and they were totally estranged. Through all the storm of contention, both the Titans kept up their friendly intercourse with my parents, for my father, though a warm adherent of our large friend, took no prominent part in politics. Our domicile was situated in a *professional* street, adjoining Rutland Square. We had also a country-house near the Curragh of Kildare, where my father had a small property. Whether in town or country, we were surrounded by every thing gay and cheerful ; and when we had no visitors, which, to say the truth, seldom happened, our own family was in itself a circle large enough for social enjoyment. I had two brothers and two sisters, all older than myself, with the exception of little Carry, my pet sister, the pet of the whole family, the spoiled darling who ruled us all. We had also an ancient aunt, who lived with us, a spinster of much energy and determination of character. And a character she was too, my poor Aunt Kate ! with her tall, stiff, angular form, her long, thin, and very marked features, and her precise, formal manner. She had a vast opinion of her own consequence, together with no small share of family pride, and looked down from a dignified elevation on my dear mother, whose birth was a shade or two lower than her own ; for she

was my father's sister, and both were come ~~c~~ what is called a good family. They were, indeed, collateral descendants of that Lord Gormanstown who took so prominent a part in the troubles of 1641. Not a soul belonging to them had ever been in business, as far as Aunt Kate's recollection went, and it went back very far, a great way beyond the loyal old Lord of the Pale, the defender of king and country, while my mother's progenitors were, on the contrary, all business people. "Shopkeepers, my dear!" as my Aunt Kate used to say to some confidential friend, with a face expressive of the most sovereign contempt. Yet the dear old lady had her good points, and was, on the whole, any thing but a bad sister-in-law to my poor mother. She had been somewhat of a belle—at least she said so—in her early days, and prided herself still on what she called the gentility of her carriage. She was fond of dress, but unluckily she always managed to wear the most fantastic costume that ever woman wore, at least in this exquisite nineteenth century. Yet, dear Aunt Kate was a special favorite with our most distinguished visitors, to whom her little odd ways were worth gold, while the sterling value of her character commanded their esteem. The barrister to whom I first alluded took special pleasure in practising on my good aunt's simple vanity, and even now, when time and death have made their memories solemn, I can hardly refrain from smiling as I sit in my lonely room and summon from the storehouse of the past the Hogarth-like pictures of many a humorous

scene wherein my ancient relative and the great lawyer were the principal actors.

It so happened that our friend had a friend who was famous for having the tenderest and most inflammable of hearts where our sex was concerned. To borrow the words of a song more popular than elegant:

“Red-hot as a ball from a cannon
Was *this* Irishman’s heart for the ladies.”

He was a man of some genius, too, having attained some distinction in the world of science—a gentleman by birth and by education; yet, strange to say, his years were “in the sere and yellow leaf,” and he still pining in single—shall I say *blessedness*?—not so, for honest Tom was *not* blessed in his singleness, and would have made himself *double* if he could. In fact, he was known to have made several fruitless attempts, and had latterly desisted in very hopelessness. And yet, he was neither old nor ugly, but somehow that capricious deity Hymen seem to have declared against him. It was, however, well understood among his friends—and, to say the truth, he had very many—that the wearing of petticoats was *not* the sole qualification he required in the favored *she*. The possession of youth and beauty was said to be indispensably necessary. Now all this was well known to the arch wag who was, in fact, Tom’s great patron, model, and it might be, master, and good capital he made use of it for the amusement of himself and others. One of these frolics I am tempted to tell, as one of our own family was a party concerned.

"Tom," said he one day to his devoted follower, "how stands your heart just now? Engaged, or not engaged, *that* is the question?"

"Disengaged, I pledge you my honor."

"Well," said the counsellor, assuming a confidential air, and lowering his voice to almost a whisper, "I have a young lady *in perspecto*, who will suit you to a T: a bewitching creature, Tom, highly accomplished, and all the rest, every thing, in fact, that a reasonable man could desire. I hope she may not think you too old—that's all."

"Me too old!" cried Tom with a start; "why surely you jest! It is not come to that with me yet, I think. But who is the lady, my dear sir?—do I know her?"

"You *shall* know her, and that before long. But mind, I manage this matter myself. I must manœuvre a little to bring you together, for the lady has quite a distrust of strangers, especially if they be unmarried gentlemen. You understand?"

"Oh! yes, perfectly," said Tom, looking all the time very much puzzled; "but, I say, my good sir, where's the use in my trying any more? the fates are against me, I see that clearly."

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense, man! Your hour has not come yet. *My* lady will, I hope, be the star of your fortune; so mind you be all ready, 'puffed, powdered, and shaved,' when I call for you on Thursday next. We dine at Harry Preston's, and so does your pole-star that is to be. I am anxious to see you settled, Tom! I am, upon my honor, and will depend on you to turn this

opportunity to account. You may never have such another, mind, I tell you."

Tom was profuse in his thanks for such fatherly kindness, and promised to be very punctual on Thursday: indeed, that was not any great stretch for him, for he was at all times remarkably punctual to his appointments.

This arranged to his satisfaction, as regarded the gentleman, he next made it his business to see my aunt, to whom he slyly insinuated that a certain friend of his was most anxious to make her acquaintance. "What his motives are, Miss Preston, it is not for me to say, neither would it be decorous if I did, inasmuch as young gentlemen who desire to make the acquaintance of young ladies, are apt to have peculiar notions of their own."

"Oh! certainly, Counsellor! certainly," said my aunt, trying hard to bring up a blush, and affecting to be very intent on the workbox, whose contents she was arranging at the moment. "I shall be most happy to meet the gentleman, as you say he is a friend of yours."

"A very particular friend, indeed! Good-morning, Miss Preston, you must excuse the shortness of my visit. I am just on my way to that meeting at the Rotunda. I hope you will pay a little extra attention to your toilet on Thursday, for even *you*, my dear Miss Preston, cannot afford to dispense with the aid of ornament. I never could agree with him who said that 'Beauty unadorned is adorned the most.' I know Mrs. Preston is invisible at this hour, but you will have the goodness to tell her that I bring an extra guest on Thurs-

day. Good-morning once again!—how well that blush becomes you!"

With a hasty shake-hands he slipped through the door, fearful of laughing in the face of the simpering old lady, whose face had no fresher color at the moment than the drab silk dress she wore.

Great and very pleasurable was the excitement of my dear good aunt all that afternoon, and all next day, which was the eve of the great day. It is true she kept the secret to herself, at least she thought so, never once intimating, even to my mother, that she had any particular interest in the expected stranger. To us girls, however, (we were none of us of age yet to be brought into company,) she was a little more communicative, giving us divers hints of the great conquest she had in view. After a careful and very close examination of her wardrobe, she sallied out on Wednesday morning, alone and on foot, leaving a message for my mother that she was going a-shopping. Shortly after her return, arrived a porter with a rather large parcel; and my aunt, who was evidently on the watch, called to the servant from the staircase to bring it at once to her room.

After tea, we all went to Portobello Gardens to witness an exhibition of fire-works, and, on returning home, my parents found some friends who had dropped in to spend the evening. The visitors being very intimate with the family, my sister Emily and I were permitted to remain in the drawing-room, and a merry evening we all had of it. I remember particularly one gentleman giving us an account of a scene which he had that

day witnessed at the steps of the Bank of Ireland, in which Blind Ousely, the famous fanatic and street-preacher was the principal actor. The story was told with infinite humor. The narrator was gifted with rare imitative powers, did ample justice to the whining cant of the would-be apostle, and the rich, liquid tones of the Dublin "Jackeens," who cracked their jokes at his expense, and paid back his unctuous exhortations word for word with their local slang. We youngsters enjoyed this amazingly, and even my grave aunt unbent sufficiently to honor the narrator with a patronizing smile.

The evening wore on, and one by one our visitors dropped off, when, after sitting a while, talking over the exhibition, and other matters of equal interest to ourselves, Emily and myself were gently reminded by my mother, that late hours were any thing but good cosmetics for young girls, whereupon we instantly retired, for that dear parent's word was ever law to us. It might have been an hour after, and the house was silent as death, when a wild shriek roused us from our beds. Hurrying out into the lobby, my sister and I were met by my father and mother, who had but lately come up stairs.

"What on earth can that be?" exclaimed my mother, pale as a ghost; "one would think the sound came from the drawing-room."

"That is impossible, my dear," observed my father, "for you know we left it so lately, and I'm positive there wasn't a creature in it then."

"Whether or no, father, it's from there the sound comes," said George, my eldest brother, popping out of his room half dressed.

"Well! well! let us go down at all events," said my mother—so down we all went, Carry clinging to my mother's skirts in mortal terror. On reaching the drawing-room, there was a slight hesitation visible in my father's manner, but unwilling to let it appear, he hastily opened the door, and in we all went with a rush. What a sight met our eyes! O, for your pencil, Hogarth! to do justice to the inimitable picture. A bedroom candle flickered on a table, its faint light hardly dispelling the gloom of the spacious apartment, and we had to look very closely before we perceived that any living soul was present. But sure enough there was, for in a large arm-chair, near the fireplace sat, or rather reclined, my Aunt Kate, looking more like a spectre than a thing of flesh and blood. She had evidently changed her dress since we saw her an hour or so before, and such a dress as that in which she now appeared no sane mortal ever wore in our generation, at least off the stage. The robe was of some dark, heavy material, literally covered with spangles, especially about the bosom, and the head-dress consisted of a turban-like roll of scarlet gauze, ornamented with short marabout feathers, presenting a woful contrast to the corpse-like countenance of my poor aunt.

"Ho! ho! Kate, I see how it is," said my father, well pleased to find that nothing serious was the matter. You came down to make your toilet at the pier-

glass: eh, Kate? I suppose you meant to dress over night, when you had the room to yourself."

"Be still now, Harry," said my gentle mother, seeing the real blush that mounted to her sister-in-law's face. "Poor Kate has been taken suddenly ill," at the same time she made a sign to us youngsters to restrain our mirth, for we were actually in fits of laughter.

"I'll tell you all about it another time," whispered my aunt, eagerly laying hold of the smelling-bottle offered by my mother.

"What brought you here at all, Kate?" persisted my father, in his blunt, good-natured way. "One would think you were playing *la sonnambula*, and had walked forth in the body in a costume from the land of dreams."

"You will oblige me, Harry Preston," said my aunt, stiffly rising from her chair, to our increased amusement—"you will oblige me by keeping such remarks to yourself. I desire that you should remember who I am. I should think a fine dress, even a fancy dress, is nothing new in our family. I am grieved to see you so forgetful of what is due to your sister, and your children, of course, follow suit. Teresa!" to my mother, "I'll trouble you to help me up stairs. Thank you," she said, in her most dignified tone to my father, who had offered his arm, and she swept past him with the air of an empress. When my mother had assisted her to regain her chamber, she confessed to her that she had been trying on a new purchase, (in what costume-shop she had procured it we never knew,) which she meant to wear at dinner on the following day, and being anxious to see exactly how it fitted, she had, as my father guessed,

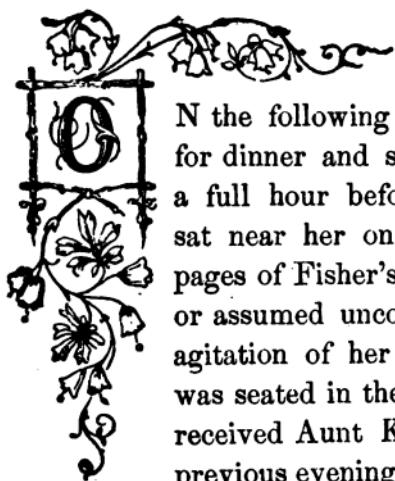
gone down to view herself and it in the pier-glass in the drawing-room ;—“ but, my dear ! ” said she, “ the light was so dim, and the room so vast and gloomy reflected in the glass, that when I got a peep at myself I was frightened at first, for the figure looked for all the world like the ghost that appears in Trimbleton House. I really was frightened for the moment, and my nerves got such a shock that I couldn’t get over it, do as I would. But, Teresa, my dear, not a word of this to any one. Mind, I’ll depend on you ! ”

My mother would only promise to keep the secret on condition that Aunt Kate should give up the notion of appearing next day in her new costume. To this she willingly acceded, “ for to tell you the truth, my dear,” said she, “ I’ve got a horror of it—I have indeed.”

So the luckless costume disappeared forever from our gaze, turban and all, and what became of it was for many a day a subject of speculation among us. My father used, once in a while, to give a sly hint concerning it, just enough to excite my poor aunt’s nervous fears, but a look from my mother would always call him to order just in time to save the delicate secret from vulgar ken. Carry was a much more dangerous individual, for she would persist in talking, at least in the family circle of Aunt Kate’s shining dress, and wondering why she never wore it. Threatening Carry was of no manner of use, but my good aunt tried various other means, chiefly of the appetizing sort. Many a package of choice sugar-plums went to stop her mouth, and a rose-bud of a mouth Carry had. But, let us on to the meeting of my aunt and her supposed *inamorata*.

CHAPTER II.

THE DISCOVERY, AND OTHER MATTERS OF FAMILY HISTORY



N the following day my aunt was dressed for dinner and seated in the drawing-room a full hour before the time. My mother sat near her on the sofa, turning over the pages of Fisher's "Book of Beauty," in real or assumed unconsciousness of the nervous agitation of her sister-in-law. My father was seated in the identical chair which had received Aunt Kate's fainting bulk on the previous evening. His attention was so engrossed by a parliamentary debate, that he took but little notice at the moment of Kate or any one else. Exactly a quarter before five, a footman's knock echoed through the house. My aunt half started from her seat, sat down again, spread out her garter-blue satin to the best advantage, ran a finger through each of her barrel curls to give it the proper set, and had just completed her preparations by drawing in her lips to smaller dimensions—for they were rather of the thickest—when

bang open went the door, and in came Mr. —, followed closely by his faithful friend Tom. My aunt received both with a gracious smile, and Tom shook hands all round with a more confident air than usual, but it was easy to see that both kept watching the door; each expecting the advent of the promised beau or belle. And the counsellor, though engaged in conversation with my father and mother, kept an eye on the pair from under his projecting brows, his face all the time brimful of humor. One or two other guests having arrived, and the hand of the time-piece on the mantel pointing to five o'clock, dinner was announced, and the gentlemen offered their arms to the ladies.

"Tom!" cried his friend, "we leave Miss Preston for you. Being the only young lady present she is yours by right."

"Thank you," said Tom, offering his arm to the lady with anything but alacrity. "I am much obliged to you—will you allow me, Miss Preston?"

Miss Preston did allow him, but there was nothing very cordial in the acceptance of his arm.

"You expected some others, did you not?" said Tom, feeling it necessary to say something, as they followed their leaders down stairs. He also hoped to draw out the name of his expected fair one by this indirect means.

"Yes, I believe so," replied the lady rather curtly, thinking of the enamored swain who was to have come but did not. "The counsellor was to have brought a friend of his."

"Strange," thought Tom, "he must have paired off

with *my* young lady. It is very provoking—very!" They were just entering the dining-room, and Tom had to seat Miss Preston, though, as he doubtless said to himself, he could have seen her at Jericho.* During dinner nothing occurred to enlighten either of the expectants. Once my father made my aunt change color by asking my mother, with a sly glance at his sister, "What has become of the lady whom we saw in ethereal garments last night? I thought we should have met her at dinner."

Tom looked eager and excited—my aunt nervous and agitated, and the Counsellor (as my aunt called him) eyed the tremor of both with intense satisfaction. My mother looked reproachfully at my father, but her voice when she spoke was calm and soft as usual. "The lady you mean," said she, "left town this morning, and will not return for some time." Tom's countenance fell, and my aunt's rose.

At the close of the dessert, when my aunt and the other ladies rose from the table, the Counsellor said to aunt as she passed him: "I owe you an apology, Miss Preston, for not having fulfilled my promise—at least to your expectations. I will tell you another time why the gentleman disappointed us, but, you see, I brought a substitute."

"Stick to your claret, Counsellor, and don't mind me!" was my aunt's tart reply as she left the room. The merry laugh that echoed through the dining-room, would have given her mortal offence, but happily the door was closed behind her, and her vanity escaped that severe wind.

Emily and I were permitted, as a specia favor, to appear in the drawing-room that evening, and having got from my mother a hint of what was going on, we were looking anxiously for the entrance of the gentlemen. They came at last—it was rather early, too, for Mr.—never stayed very long at the dinner-table after the ladies retired; my aunt was sitting alone on a cushioned seat in one of the window recesses, when the Counsellor, tucking Tom's arm under his, led him up to her.

"Miss Preston!" said he, "I have spared your blushes quite long enough, I think. This is the gentleman to whom I referred in a late conversation. Tom, my good fellow, I think you are already acquainted with Miss Preston!—eh, Tom?"

"I should think I was," said Tom bluntly, at the same time averting his eyes from the lady's face.

"Well, Tom," quoth his friend, with tormenting coolness, "I have done my share: I leave you to do the rest."

"I—I beg your pardon, sir! I fear there is some mistake," stammered Tom. "I—I—I wasn't aware—upon my honor, I wasn't."

"Oh! of course not—certainly—I understand your feelings—but don't be ashamed, man! it is nothing more than I did myself! I wooed and won a Kate, too!" he added, with an almost imperceptible sigh, for he had lost but a few years before the best and most cherished of wives; and, as he often said, he was never the same man after.

"I should think there *is* a mistake," said my aunt,

standing up to the full height of her commanding figure, till she absolutely looked down upon poor Tom, who seemed to cower and wither away beneath her cold, proud glance—"and a very serious mistake, too. One of you, gentlemen, or perhaps both, have forgotten who *I* am. The descendant of such a house as ours is not to be treated like some silly chit on whom any jackeen may play off his pranks. Have the goodness to let me pass!"

Both gentlemen would have apologized, and my father came forward as a peacemaker, but on him my aunt was doubly severe: "Go, unworthy descendant of a noble line!" said she, in a theatrical tone; "if *you* were what you ought to be, no man would dare to make me a butt for ridicule in your house. I wash my hands of you all!" So saying, she swam out of the room with the solemn dignity of a tragedy queen. My father burst into a loud laugh, in which the others soon joined; but my mother, excusing herself for a few moments, hurried upstairs after my aunt in order to reason her out of her indignation. Tom felt anything but comfortable, and told his friend more than once that he didn't expect such treatment from him.

"I'd just as soon think of making love to my grandmother," said he, "if she were still in the land of the living. Now, my dear sir, that wasn't generous—upon my honor it was not!—what say you, Mr. Preston?"

"Pooh, pooh, man! what about it?—why, it was all a joke. If my sister, old maid like, is a little touchy or so, that's no reason why *you* should be."

Tea was now brought in, and my mother in a few minutes returned alone, announcing that Miss Preston had lain down, "just to quiet her nerves," she added with a smile.

Many a long day passed before my poor aunt could get over the effects of that shock. Encased in the armor of family pride, she had deemed herself invulnerable to the attacks of ridicule or sarcasm; and now, when she found herself reduced to the level of ordinary mortals, and actually made the subject of a practical joke, her mortification was extreme, and her resentment almost as great. That the Counsellor should be a party to the hoax, if not its originator, made the matter tenfold worse. As for Tom, he was too insignificant for any other feeling than contempt. So said Aunt Kate. "I wouldn't feel half so bad about it, my dear," said she to my mother, "only for that Miss Delany, the grocer's daughter, being present." Now this young lady was the daughter of one of the most eminent merchants in Dublin; an heiress, too, with a fortune that would buy all our property three times over. My mother smiled, for her father had been a grocer, and a retail grocer, too, at one time. But my aunt had no intention of wounding *her* at the time, and so she perceived; she therefore only smiled, and said it was really too bad that any one had been present, "though, after all," said she, "I can't see the matter as you do. What was it but a joke?"

"Joke, indeed!" said my aunt with a toss of her head; "they ought to know who they'd joke with."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance

of my father with a gentleman well known in the legal profession. He was a sort of a character in his way, too, and rejoiced in the title of attorney-at-law, which figured in large roman capitals on his door-plate, a little way from us in Dominick street.

The compliments of the day being exchanged, my father said, "Teresa, my love, I have been speaking with Mr. O'Shaughnessy here, about taking George. He is now old enough to study for a profession, and the sooner he begins, it is all the better."

"As you please, my dear!" said my mother in her quiet way; and before she could say any more, Aunt Kate broke in with—

"Harry Preston! I'm astonished at you."

"Indeed, Kate!—and why, may I ask?"

"Why, surely you wouldn't think of making an attorney of George? If you *will* have him a lawyer, why not make a counsellor of him?"

"Because changes are lightsome, my good sister, and because attorneys now-a-days make rapid fortunes if they only have their wits about them—as I think George has—and a tolerable knowledge of their business."

"I'd as soon make him a scavenger!" said my aunt in her most contemptuous tone. "Who ever heard of a Preston with *attorney-at-law* after his name! Tell me that, now?"

"Why, Kate," said my father, "you surely forget. Don't you know that our great-uncle, Dick Preston, who was land-steward to the Marquis of Wiltshire, was an attorney by profession?"

"Fie ! fie ! Harry ! why will you talk so ?" cried my aunt, actually red with vexation ; "were it after dinner now, I should say you had taken too much wine. Mr. O'Shaughnessy," turning to the amused lawyer of that name, "my brother talks so fast at times, that he hardly takes time to think what he says. Allow me to correct his statement : the respected relative, to whom he has just referred, was not a land-steward to Lord Wiltshire (low days with him when he had *any* thing to do with the descendant of a Cromwellian trooper !)—He was his agent, *not* his land-steward, or any other steward !"

"Land-steward, I maintain !" said my father positively, whereupon my aunt's color rose, and she was preparing an angry retort, when Mr. O'Shaughnessy, on a signal from my mother, interfered with—

"Well ! well ! Miss Preston, let it pass ! Ladies are always right. Fine blood the Preston's ! remarkably fine !—we'll make you a present of the honorable gentleman, the agent that was. Ahem ! no need to quarrel about him, ahem !—Mr. Preston ! I've got an appointment at the courts at twelve precisely—another time will do for Master George's affair. Ahem ! good-morning, ladies. Business is business, you know ! Coming my way, Preston, eh ?"

"Yes, yes," said my father, with a significant glance at my mother, "I'll be with you as far as the quay."

"How insufferably familiar !" said my aunt, as they left the room together. "Preston, indeed ! I wonder how Harry can make himself jack-fellow like with such people

But he never had proper spirit, and never will now, I'm afraid."

"I fear not, indeed," said my mother, with her winning smile; and then she changed the conversation. That very day George was articled, as the lawyers say, to Mr. O'Shaughnessy, and my poor aunt had to get over her disappointment the best way she could.

The next point at issue among the elders of our house was the sending of my younger brother Alfred to college. My father was half inclined to send him to old Trinity, the local *Alma Mater*, as being the cradle of Dublin genius. But this was positively objected to by my dear mother, and to do her justice, my aunt, too, declared strenuously against it.

"A fig for your Dublin genius," said she, taking the word out of my mother's mouth, "Old Trinity, as you call it, is no place for Catholics. Unless you want to make a Protestant of Alfred, (as you're making an attorney of poor George,) don't send him there."

"Kate is right, Harry," put in my mother. "If he did not come back to us a thorough-going Protestant, you would find him a very bad Catholic, and that, in my opinion, is still worse. Why not send him to Clongowes?"

"Pshaw!" said my father, "I don't much like the Jesuits—that's the truth!"

"More shame for you!" my mother answered, with more asperity than she almost ever showed: "if you were a more practical Catholic, my dear Harry, you would never say so. It is always a bad sign to hear

Catholics saying they don't like Jesuits ; for, after all, what order has done more for the advancement of religion ? what order has waged a more vigorous warfare against the powers of darkness ? You were quite willing to send George there, and I should like to know what the Jesuits have done since ? ”

To this my father could only answer that George had not made such progress as he expected under the fathers of Clongowes.

“ That was his own fault, not theirs,” said my mother, quickly ; “ you know—we all know that George is not over studious or attentive. But, to cut the matter short, my dear, I will never give my consent to send Alfred to any Protestant institution while there are others to be had. I should fear the responsibility attached to such a step.”

“ Certainly, Teresa, certainly,” put in my aunt again, “ it would be a very shocking thing, indeed, if a Preston fell away from the true faith.”

“ Well, well, ladies ! have it your own way,” said my father, in his cheerful, off-hand way ; “ I have too much of the old family spirit, Kate, to wage war on the weaker sex. I was only breaking a lance for the sake of amusement : I am quite willing to take Alfred to Clongowes to-morrow, by way of making amends.”

My mother said “ Not quite so soon,” but it was agreed upon that we should make a party on the following Monday to escort Alfred to Clongowes. The intervening days were days of bliss to us youngsters. We had a regular succession of amusements in the shape of juvenile parties, visits to the Strawberry Beds,

CLDN OF THE DOWNS.—(See page 45.)



the Botanic Gardens, the Zoological Gardens in the Park, and lastly, a pic-nic excursion to the Glen of the Downs, one of the far-famed beauties of beautiful Wicklow. Many a lovely spot is hidden among the wild mountains of that region, from the romantic coast of Bray to the enchanted solitudes of Glendalough, from Powerscourt Waterfall to the world-renowned Meeting of the Waters in the exquisite Vale of Avoca, where we spent one of the last days that Alfred was with us. We had lunch in the valley at a cottage belonging to a professional friend of my father's. In the pleasant parlor where we sat there was a bay-window draped with clematis and woodbine and overlooking the famous confluence of the three rivers. As we sat there admiring the prospect, and often again during that evening's ramble through the Vale, how often did I murmur to myself in the fullness of enjoyment—

“Sweet Vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade with the friends I love best,
When the storms which we feel in this cold world should cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, might mingle in peace.”

The appointed Monday came at last, and off we all sallied to convey Alfred to his new destination. We were accompanied by Miss Delany and a dandified young gentleman who aspired to the possession of her hand and fortune. Unluckily for himself he was much given to the wearing of jewelry, affected a lisping accent, and professed a great admiration of every thing foreign, with a corresponding contempt of every thing Irish. He

was fain to pass for a travelled beau, and talked in ecstacies of Rhineland and Alpine scenery, although he had never set foot on the continental soil of Europe. Now Miss Delany, notwithstanding her plebeian origin, was a girl of fine taste and cultivated mind, and loved her country as only an Irish girl can. If there was anything in the world she hated it was foppery and affectation, and she never spared either one or the other when it fell under the lash of her caustic humor. She was, however, a good natured, lively, off-handed girl, and her reputed fortune more than made up for her want of personal attractions. With all our family she was an especial favorite, although Aunt Kate did, at times, "give her a cut," as she said herself, "about sugar casks and tea canisters." Her mother was devoted to her housekeeping, and seldom left the house, except to go to church, which she did every morning of her life, for they lived in Marlborough street, quite near the Church of the Conception, the Metropolitan Church of Dublin. The father was too much engrossed with business to visit much on week days, so what time Maria could spare from her mother she usually spent with us.

The fifteen miles from Dublin to Clongowes were whirled over in less than two hours by the wheels of our family carriage, a spacious, and rather old-fashioned barouche, drawn by a pair of handsome bays, (of whose speed and other perfections my father was reasonably proud,) and at four o'clock on that cloudless summer afternoon we came in sight of the venerable looking pile, once a baronial castle, now the chief establishment of

the Jesuits in Ireland. We young people being all tolerably well read in the history of medieval times, were quite struck with the sight of the fine old building, its noble proportions, massive towers, and battlemented walls.

"Now, that is what I call an appropriate dwelling for the sons of the martial Loyola, the most warlike of modern saints." This exclamation of Miss Delany made us all smile. But she heeded us not, for her eyes were fixed on the imposing edifice before us.

"Yes," said my mother, catching her thought, "those strong towers are certainly emblematic of the hereditary virtues which form the strength of the Society of Jesus, and enable it to resist from age to age the unceasing attacks of the enemy of souls. The ancient fortalice of the Brownes has but changed masters—its destiny is still the same. It is now the stronghold of faith, held for Christ, by the valiant brethren of Xavier and Loyola."

"I shouldn't like to be a Jesuit," lisped young Dillon, with a deprecating look at the heiress.

"I should think not, indeed," said Maria, pointedly; "pray, Mr. Dillon! were you educated here?" And she glanced furtively at my mother.

"Here!—at Clongowes!" he repeated in horror, "why, no, Miss Delany! I belong to Trinity—I graduated there."

"Ah, indeed!" said the sly Sultana, "I might have known that without asking. Such good Catholics and patriotic Irishmen can only come forth from Trinity College, Dublin."

The cool sarcasm of her tone staggered even Dillon's thick-skinned self-sufficiency. We all tried hard to keep from laughing, while the beau answered, pulling up his shirt-collar at the same time: "No Catholic, or Irish man, need be ashamed of an *Alma Mater* that gave birth—literary birth—to Thomas Moore."

"Assuredly not!" said the incorrigible Maria, in the same cool, easy tone; "Thomas Moore is a bright example—he wrote *Lalla Rookh* and the *Irish Melodies*, and many other fine things, no doubt, and left off going to confession, or hearing Mass, or any other such old-fashioned Catholic customs, soon after he entered the halls of Trinity. I wouldn't give one farthing for the Catholicity of young men brought up in any such institution. It is no longer the seamless robe—the livery of our Lord's servants—but a tattered, filthy garment, whose original color is no longer to be distinguished. Faugh! I can smell such creatures a hundred yards off, and if *I* had my will they would be banished from civilized society. A man or a woman who, baptized a Christian, can lose sight of his immortal destiny, and rest his hopes on the pitiful vanities of this world,—its glittering tinsel and its delusive promises,—is, in my mind, only fit to associate with apes and monkeys."

"Glittering tinsel!" cried Carry, aloud; "what is that? Is it like Aunt Kate's dress, or what?"

Fortunately, Aunt Kate was not present, having accepted Alfred's offer to drive her out in the gig. As it was, Carry's question served as a timely diversion for poor Dillon, who, under cover of the laugh which fol-

lowed, managed to regain his self-confidence, terribly shaken by Maria's caustic applications.

We had now reached the college gates, and my father, who had all the way been unusually silent, roused himself from a profound reverie to hand out the ladies. Dillon extended his hand with a gracious smile to Miss Delany, but the light-hearted girl bounded past him with a merry laugh, and the discomfited youth stood looking after her with a comical expression of blank amazement depicted on his countenance. My father laughed heartily, and tapping Dillon on the shoulder, said gayly: "Never mind, Authur, never mind; 'the worse luck now, the better again,' you know. Come along, and see Alfred made over to the Jesuits."

"May I have the honor, Miss Elinor?" said the dandy, presenting his elbow with a low bow—so very low that I could not bring myself to refuse. So I took his arm as my mother did my father's, and into the hall we all went, and thence were shown into the reception-room,—a noble apartment, ornamented with portraits of the principal saints of the Society of Jesus. We were very soon joined by the Superior,—a tall, dignified personage, rather in the decline of life, with a grave and placid countenance, and a smile of winning sweetness. He was already well acquainted with my father and mother, and received us all with the simple, unaffected urbanity which ever distinguishes the truly religious. He inquired kindly for George, and seemed pleased to hear that he was becoming rather more studious than usual. In a few moments we were all quite at our ease; and

Dillon so far forgot his professed dislike of the Jesuits, as to partake with evident good will of the refreshments offered by the good father.

Alfred was rather in low spirits at first, and the sight of my mother's dejected countenance made him feel none the better; but the Superior managed to give the conversation so cheerful a turn that the dullest of us caught its genial influence, and when we came to bid good-bye to Alfred, after a ramble through the college grounds, he seemed perfectly satisfied to be left behind.

"You will find Alfred rather piously inclined, Father," said my dear mother, retaining the hand of her favorite son yet another moment. "I have some hopes that he may prove to have a vocation for your order."

"Indeed!" said the Superior, with a smile; "then, if it be the will of God, we shall have in him a second Stanislaus Kotska. A decided manifestation of piety in one so young—especially of our own sex—is very uncommon in this age of the world. George was not overburdened with piety. We have always considered that his tastes and propensities were decidedly of a martial character. He *may* make a good lawyer, but I am rather inclined to doubt it, inasmuch as he has not patience enough to carry him through the earlier drudgery of that profession."

My father expressed himself of a contrary opinion. "Well, well!" said the courtly priest, with his bland smile, "I dare say you know him best, Mr. Preston. However, madam," to my mother, "we shall try hard to make a Jesuit of your Alfred."

He then bowed us out, with many kind wishes for our health and happiness. "Of course they will," said my aunt, as she took her seat in the carriage, my father and Carry being to return in the gig, with the stipulation, on Carry's part, that she was to drive.

"What do you mean, my dear Kate?" inquired my mother.

"Why, that they will be *very sure* to try hard to keep Alfred in their order. It is not every day they happen on a Preston. Well! God grant him grace any how, to have a true vocation—we can wish nothing better for him!"

It was now the cool of evening, and nothing could be more reviving to mind or body than the balmy freshness of the air, richly laden, as it was, with the delicious perfume of the hawthorn blossoms wafted from the hedges on either side. Here and there from about the stems of the bushes peeped out the blushing wild-rose, its thin frail petals already moist with dew. The yellow primrose and the pale blue-bell enamelled the green sloping banks beneath the hedges; and Dillon, as the only gentleman in the carriage, had to get out more than once to "make up a nosegay" for our petted Carry.

We were whirling along at a rapid rate towards one of the outlets of the metropolis, when Carry clapped her hands joyfully and cried, "Stop, stop, I tell you!—don't you see Susy Broadigan there under the tree?"

And sure enough, there sat Susy the apple-woman, by the side of a large basket heaped with currants and gooseberries, her staple article being not yet in market.

She had overheard Carry's exclamation, and her broad red face was radiant with smiles as she called out, "Ah ! then, God's blessin' be about you, Miss Carry dear ! sure it's yourself that's always glad to see poor Susy !" —rising, and making at the same time a low curtsey to my mother ; " an the rest o' the quality, long life to them ! "

" Why, Susy," said my mother, " what brings you out here ? "

" Well, ma'am, to tell you the truth, I found business a little slack the day in the city within, so I thought I'd try my luck a little further, afore the fruit would begin to spoil on my hands."

" Were you at the house to-day ? " my mother asked.

" Oh ! yis, ma'am, I paid the cook a visit as usual this mornin' early—bedad, it wouldn't do to neglect that, for many a good bit an' sup I get there that the children wouldn't have any other way ! The Lord reward you an' yours, ma'am, an' may ye never want a friend when ye need one ! I hope the master and the young gentlemen are all well ! "

" Very well indeed, thank you ! "

" The Lord keep them so," said Susy fervently, as she popped herself down again on the stone which served her for a seat.

All this time Dillon had been eying the fruit-vender with a contemptuous, quizzical look, as though he considered her quite a curiosity, and, finding the carriage about to move on, he thought he ought to raise a laugh at her expense.

"I say, Susanna!" said he, "where do you buy your paint? I do admire the color of your cheeks—it's lovely—it's divine!"

"What's that you say?" cried Susy, in a raised voice; "is it axin' me where I buy my paint—I'll soon tell you that, Mister Arthur Dillon—I buy it where your ould father bought his, when he used to be hawkin' knives an' scissors an' things round the city, an' keepin' a stand on Carlisle Bridge. Not but what he was a dacinter man than ever *you'll* be. D'ye hear that, sir? Sure it's full of your fun your are this fine summer's evening; but that'll tache you not to be makin' your game of God's poor!"

"Fie, fie, Susy," said my mother, "why do you speak so to the young gentleman?"

"Gentleman, indeed!" cried Susy, disdainfully; "he's no more a gentleman, ma'am, than your coachman there. I ax your pardon, ma'am, for makin' you such an answer. Gentleman, indeed!" she repeated, and we could hear her grumbling and talking to herself as the carriage drove off.

"Well, Mr. Dillon! what do you think of Susy's tongue?" said Maria, with more than her wonted archness; "don't you think there is something in the old proverb, that *it's ill meddling with edged tools?*"

"What an excessively vulgar creature!" replied the dandy, still laboring under the effects of his well-merited castigation.

"For whom do you intend that compliment?" said Maria, laughing. "For Susy or myself, which?"

"Oh! for Susy, of course," he replied with unusual energy; "could you for a moment suppose, my dear Miss Delany, that any man could be found to speak to you in such terms?"

"Can't say!" replied the provoking fair one, with a doubtful shake of the head, "tastes are different, you know. I wonder now," she added, assuming a thoughtful air, "how it would work were Susy and I to change places. Were I selling gooseberries by the quart, and Susy riding in a carriage in such good company, the real or supposed inheritor of the goods and chattels of Miles Delany, Esquire, of Marlborough street, in this city;—query: would not my elegance, etc., and her excessive vulgarity, change sides? Ah, flattery! your name is man!"

Poor Arthur was so overpowered by the crushing weight of Maria's sarcasm, following so quick on Susy's fierce rebuke, that he kept silence the remainder of the way, notwithstanding the good-natured exertions of my mother and aunt.

But why indulge in these minute details of scenes so long past—scenes which can now have little interest for any, since most of the actors have passed from this world. Still, these detached and fragmentary reminiscences have an indescribable charm for myself in the loneliness and isolation of my present lot. I love to people my solitude with forms from the past, from the warm, sunny, well-remembered days of early youth, when associates were all friends, loving and beloved, and the veiled future shone with transcendent brightness in the warm glow of young imagination. Ah, futurity! fu-

turity ! how seldom do you pay back the golden promises of the youthful heart ! how seldom do you improve on acquaintance ! Phantom !—shadow ! what are you ? You, whom we are always pursuing, but never overtake ! You, who promise so much, and do so little ! You, who steal our life away moment after moment, with your illusive hopes, till the gates of death bring us to a sudden stand, and opening before us, reveal you to us, real and substantial, in all the splendor of celestial bliss, or the hideous misery of the infernal world. Futurity, you delude me no longer—here, your power is at end—the feverish dream is past, and I can look you in the face without fear or hope, as regards this world.

From this time forward our family began to drop off. About a week after our visit to Clongowes, my poor mother caught cold one evening, during a moonlight stroll on the beach at Blackrock, where we had gone to spend a few days. Her constitution had never been to say strong, and she had been visibly declining since a few months after Carry's birth. This cold, though at first considered of trifling importance, in the end cost us that most precious life, for it ended at last in rapid consumption, which in six weeks carried her to the grave, and left us all desolate. It was night, and a sorrowful night to us. Alfred had been summoned from college, and he and George hung over my mother's bed with the still, mute sorrow of those who were about to lose their hope, their pride—for my mother's rare excellence, her tender, loving heart, and her exquisite sympathy for our childish troubles, endeared her to us all,

while her talents and accomplishments made us proud of her. Her sons, especially, valued her worth ; and I do not believe they, either of them, ever forgot the unutterable sorrow of that night, when, after receiving the last rites with the beautiful dispositions of the true Christian, she calmly breathed her last, having previously obtained a promise from my aunt that she would never leave us. The final parting was much softened to my dear mother by Alfred's voluntary assurance that he would, with God's assistance, join the Society of Jesus.

"Heaven bless you, my son !" murmured the dying parent—"Heaven bless you for that word. I am so glad—so thankful !"

"Well, mamma !" said Emily, in her soft, sweet voice, "if that makes you glad, I, too, can give you pleasure. I will be a nun."

"A nun ! my beloved Emily !—and where ?"

"In Cabra Convent, mamma ! I have had it in my mind ever since we were present at Helen Mooney's reception."

My mother raised her feeble hands and eyes to heaven in pious fervor ; then turning to me, she said, with something like her wonted smile, "And what of my Elinor ?"

My heart was too full to answer, and I turned away to hide my tears ; but Carry threw herself down beside my mother, and whispered in her ear, "Mamma ! I won't stay here after you go. If God takes you, he may just take me, too, and I want you to ask him, when you go to heaven, if he won't let me go."

This touched my mother's heart more than all the rest, for Carry was her youngest and best-beloved. So great was her agitation, that my father was forced to tear Carry away; and he had barely time to return to the bed-side, when the priest who had just entered made a sign for us all to kneel, and to hush our wailing. He at once commenced the prayers for the dying, and before he had read them through, the sudden cessation of my mother's laboring breath made him pause and look towards her. She was dead! and without giving us time to discover our loss, he passed on to the prayers for the the dead. Dreary transition! who has not felt its awful import; what Christian has not shuddered at the thought that the soul, which but a moment before animated that lump of clay, is already before its Judge receiving its eternal sentence? But how much more terrific is the sudden cessation of the life-pulse, when the heart thus stilled for ever was the heart that loved us best—when the eye that has but now looked its last on this world, was a lamp of light, a fount of love to us—when the inanimate body before us is that of a beloved parent, the head and heart of an entire family!—ah! it is then indeed that death *has a sting!*

The hushed stillness of our sorrowing household during many weeks of mourning was strangely contrasted with the whirl of wild excitement going on in the world without. It was the memorable year of '43, when the country was agitated

"From the centre all round to the sea,"

with the outbursts of popular feeling on the great Repeal question. The genius of O'Connell had evoked the full measure of enthusiasm latent in the crushed heart of Ireland, and the people arose the island over in the new-born consciousness of numerical strength determined to have their rights—if they could be obtained without bloodshed. Some there were who prognosticated that the people, once thoroughly aroused and made sensible of their own strength, would eventually cast off all restraint, break from their moorings, and launch out on the broad sea of revolutionary excess. But these people reasoned from analogy. They knew not the elements of which Irish nationality is composed, or rather the foundations on which it rests; they knew not the deep heart of Ireland, nor the hold which religion has on all the feelings and faculties of the people. It was the year of the monster meetings, perhaps the greatest moral phenomena this age of ours has witnessed. The voice of the great liberator reëchoed through the island, as he called on the people to come forth in their might to strengthen his arm in the great moral-force war he was waging against the colossal power of England. And the people obeyed his call, and, like Lazarus of old, they came forth from the grave of sluggish despondency, alive to their rights as men, and prepared to do the bidding of the mighty master who held the fulcrum of the national lever. Truly that was, as O'Connell himself wrote, an unparalleled state of things, “with the people boiling up at every side, but still obedient, as if they were under military command. Not the least shadow of danger of

an outbreak, or of any violence—tranquillity the most perfect.” *

Our family, being in deep mourning, went but little into public, so that we missed seeing many of the popular gatherings. My father, however, managed to see a few of them, and even he, with his rather phlegmatic temperament, contrived to catch a portion of the enthusiasm which pervaded all classes. He had gone in O’Connell’s train to Mullaghmast, and there witnessed the first appearance of the great *Repeal Cap*, with its wreath of golden shamrocks. The all but military uniform of the Repeal leaders quite took his fancy, and he could talk of nothing else for some days after. It was nothing but how this one looked, and how that one looked in “the uniform.”

“And I’ll tell you what it is, Kate,” said he to my aunt, who sat opposite in my mother’s place, “if you had seen Tom as he stood there on the hill by the side of his chief, you wouldn’t turn up your nose at him if he came a-wooing again.”

My aunt half-smothered a rising sigh. Perhaps she did begin to repent of her cavalier treatment of Tom, but it would never do to say so, and she cut my father very short with an exclamation which was anything but complimentary to the absent swain.

“Well, more fool you ! ” said my father with assumed seriousness; “you’ll never get such another chance while your name is Kate Preston. Mind my words ! ”

* Private letter to Richard Lalor Sheil, written in Richmond prison.

Aunt Kate smiled scornfully, and her barrel-curls literally rose on end in a paroxysm of family pride. "For a Preston," said she, "*no* marriage at all is better than a low one. But I forgot," observing that he changed color, "that cap fits too well—it is rather tight, I see."

"Well! well! Kate, for God's sake, let us not quarrel—there are but two of us in it now. Are you going to Cabra to-day with the girls? Emily, my love," drawing her to him, "why are you in such a hurry to leave us? You will have all your life to spend in the convent; then why not give us a reprieve of some days before you shut yourself up forever?"

"My dear papa," Emily replied, "life is short at the best, and I have as yet done little for eternity. Every day I spend here is so much more time given to the gratification of self. In affairs of this kind, delays are dangerous. Do not ask me to stay longer!—do not, papa—my own dear papa!—if mamma were alive, you know she would be glad to see me going for such a purpose."

"She would be glad, and yet sorry, child," said my father, in a tremulous tone, and pushing back his chair, he walked to the window, leaving the chop which he had taken on his plate, untasted. Two or three times he cleared his throat, looked out into the street as though much interested in something he saw there, then walked back to where Emily sat, and laid his hand on her head:

"*She* would not have prevented you from going—neither will I, Emily. I feel it is the will of God, and I know it is all for the better. I'll be home about three

—so mind, and be all ready for the start." He was going, but my aunt called after him :

" Why, Harry, you have eaten nothing. Come back and finish your breakfast!"

But my father only smiled and shook his head as he vanished through the doorway. For myself, I had not been able to say a word, for somehow my heart was heavy—very heavy, as though with a sad presentiment of evil.

George had had an early breakfast, and was gone to his office, and Carry was staying with a friend at Rathmines; so our family-party was small that morning. It was "growing small by degrees," as we sensibly felt, at times.

As soon as breakfast was over, Emily said to me, in a low voice, that she would like to see mamma's grave once more—"just to take a last look," she added with a smile that was painfully sad and tender.

" What's that she says ? " inquired my aunt, whose hearing was rather impaired of late. I repeated Emily's words.

" Poor child ! poor child ! " murmured the soft-hearted old maid, " it's only right she should have her wish. Run, Elinor dear, and tell Larry to get out the carriage. But stay ! stay !—I'll ring !—it is not the thing for young ladies to give such messages to servants—that is, men-servants."

She rang accordingly, and imperative commands were transmitted to Larry to lose no time in getting out the carriage.

"Lord bless my sowl!" said Larry, from the foot of the kitcher stairs, "isn't the ould madam in the d—l of a hurry this morning!—I hope she'll wait till we feed the horses anyhow!—I suppose they want a bite as well as their neighbors!"

We were passing through the hall at the time and the sound of Larry's grumbling voice reached my aunt's ear. "What *is* the fellow talking about?" she said, raising her own voice at the same time.

"Oh! nothing in the world, Miss," replied the supple-tongued groom still from below, "only about the horses, the creatures!—I'm goin' to give them a bite of oats, an' after that, Miss, we'll be ready in no time."

We drove to Glassnevin, and each of us, not excepting Aunt Kate, had "a good cry" over my dear mother's grave. Emily, in particular, remained long kneeling with her face bowed down over the monumental stone which recorded the name and age of the deceased, with the customary prayer for the repose of her soul. Having indulged our grief for some time beside the narrow house wherein the dearest of parents awaits the resurrection, we paid a short visit of charity to the grave of Mrs. Delany, who had gone the way of all flesh some few weeks before.

Shall any one ever read this story who has visited Cabra Convent in the summer time? Does that vision of perfect beauty (the still, calm beauty of a convent) and of exquisite neatness rise before the reader's memory, as he or she looks through blinding tears, as I do now, on the page of my *simple story*? Did any one

ever see a richer profusion of flowers, and especially roses—red, blushing roses of every species!—than the good nuns of Cabra have trained around their home? Even the far-famed roses of the vale of Cashmere, albeit that our national poet describes them as

“——roses the brightest that earth ever gave,”

could hardly exceed the roses of Cabra as I now see them bloom through the softening haze of memory. The house itself, the little chapel, the dormitories, the well-kept grounds and nicely-pebbled walks, are all in perfect keeping, making up a scene

“Where holy contemplation loves to dwell.”

And the gentle, graceful inmates, with their bland attention to visitors, their soft, low voices all attuned to harmony—what wonder is it that so many of their pupils return, after a few years experience of the bustling, noisy, frothy world, to seek peace and happiness in that earthly paradise. Sweet Cabra!—home of my infant years—home of my sister’s heart—how often do I think of your “hush’d repose,” and ask within myself,

Are the thrush and the linnet a-singing there yet,
Are the roses still bright over Emily’s grave?

But where was I? somewhere about our starting for the convent. Well! we left Emily there that same afternoon, and on the following morning we drove out again to see her received; a ceremony which is one of

the most touching within the whole range of the Catholic ritual. Never had our Emily looked so beautiful as she did when, having exchanged her rich, light-colored satin, (worn that day especially for contrast,) she returned up the aisle habited as a novice of the Presentation Order, and bearing a lighted taper, her small, chiselled features shaded by a close cap, and her dark, lustrous eyes hidden beneath their long drooping lashes. My father wept as his eye followed her, and George had enough to do "to keep in," as he told us after. My aunt put her handkerchief to her eyes more than once with that graceful delicacy of touch on which she prided herself not a little. When all was over, and we on our way home, (Carry having gone back some half dozen times, to snatch a last kiss from Emily,) Aunt Kate said that Emily looked every inch a Preston—"she really did!" said she; "and somehow she reminded me all the time of my cousin Maude Preston, who was afterwards abbess of an English convent."

"Was that the steward's daughter, Kate?" said my father, somewhat maliciously.

"She was the daughter of Lord Wiltshire's agent, Harry," said my aunt very stiffly, as she bent over to arrange Carry's wayward curls, the glossiest and fairest of ringlets. I should say in parenthesis, that Carry had been sent for on the previous evening in order to witness Emily's reception.

"Well, whatever she was," said my father, with something like his old smile, "she was no disgrace to the family if she looked like my Emily." And again the

tears filled his eyes and choked his voice. His paternal heart was full.

To this proposition my aunt cheerfully assented, and then a long pause ensued,—and before any of us was aware that we were so near the city, the carriage rattled over the rough, antique pavement of Stoney-batter, and on through the rather stylish thoroughfares of Queen street and Blackhall place. Poor Dublin! dear Dublin! how familiarly do your streets and squares rise before me, though years have passed—long, changeful years—since I trod them last. But who that knew you as I knew you has ever forgotten you or yours, beloved metropolis of my own dear land!—who that has known them can ever forget the warm, loving hearts, and buoyant spirits, and cultivated taste, that made your sons and daughters the best, and kindest, and most fascinating of companions!



CHAPTER III.



HAT very evening my poor aunt complained of a bad headache, to which she was by no means subject. The usual simple remedies were applied, but without success. All the night she kept moaning and turning from side to side; and as soon as my father saw her in the morning, he went off himself for the family doctor. The good old gentleman was indeed like one of the family, having been for some twenty years prescribing for its members, young and old, big and little. When he looked at my aunt he shook his head, whereat she was alarmed, and asked if he thought there was any danger.

"Why, not exactly danger, my dear Miss Preston, but there's nothing like taking things in time. *A stitch in time*, you know, *saves nine*. Please to hand me a basin, Miss Elinor, and an old ribbon?"

"Why, surely, doctor, you're not going to bleed me—why, I *never* was bled!"

"The more reason why you must be bled now. I suppose it's a bad love-fit we have, Miss Preston, and

there's nothing better for that than to draw a little blood. It cools the system, you see. Thank you, Miss Elinor! —take care of this love, my dear!—it's a terrible thing indeed, very! There, now, Miss Preston—hold out your arm! Preston, my dear fellow! hold this basin, will you? Young ladies, go into the next room a minute—we'll call when we want you. Don't look so frightened, Carry, my pet! I'm not going to kill your aunt! I'm not, indeed!—When Tom the Great failed to finish her—though between him and his leader they *did* make a murderous attack on her nerves!—but when they failed, an old fogy like myself needn't try. Go along, now, like good girls! Now, Miss Preston, senior—ahem—ahem!—Miss Kate Preston, let us see what a soldier you'll be. Keep still for one moment, and that's all we'll ask!"

"One moment, doctor!" said my aunt, "just one moment, if you please!—I fear there is no use in bleeding, or anything else—Jenny, the housemaid, saw my fetch after dark last night!"

"And what if she did?"

"And we have had sheets on the candles every night this month past."

"Come, come, now! Miss Preston, I'll hear no more of this nonsense—I hope to dance at your wedding yet; so, in order that I mayn't be disappointed, hold out your arm, I command you!"

When Carry and I were summoned back into the room, we found my aunt pale as a ghost, with her arm tightly bandaged, and the doctor preparing a sedative at a table near the window.

"What's your opinion, doctor?" said my father, as he accompanied the doctor down stairs.

"Not the shadow of a chance, my dear sir. At least, I fear so. She has a complication of disorders which can hardly fail at her time of life to prove fatal. Still, we must try to keep up her spirits—she *may* linger for some weeks to come."

"And that's all?"

"All! my good friend!—all we can expect. Good-morning! But that's true,—did you hear that the meeting at Clontarf was prevented by a proclamation?"

"No, indeed! I've heard nothing—haven't seen a paper to-day yet. But is that a fact?"

"Fact, my dear sir! positive fact! Here's the *Nation*," taking it from his pocket. "Good-bye! good-bye! I have an urgent case in Fitzwilliam square!"

Just two weeks from that day, my poor aunt was carried to Glassnevin Cemetery, and laid beside my mother. During her illness a remarkable change had taken place in her habits of thought. The ruling passion was *not* (in her) strong in death. Her pride of ancestry was no longer the same, and even the glory of that idolized progenitor who figured in the grand Catholic Confederation of 1641, had waxed dim and hazy in the far regions of memory—albeit that it was wont to stand in the foreground of my poor aunt's mind, full in the light of her vivid imagination. For several days we had carefully avoided any allusions to the possibility of her approaching death, believing her in blissful ignorance of her danger. But such was not the case. In the deep

stillness of one dreary night, when she opened her eyes after a heavy slumber and saw my father dozing in a neighboring *fauteuil*—he had pertinaciously insisted on “sitting up” that particular night with me, while the nurse slept—she beckoned me to approach, and said in her hollow, husky voice :

“ You shouldn’t have let your father sit np, my dear —poor Harry ! he has his business to attend to to-morrow. Didn’t I hear him telling the doctor this evening that the place at the Curragh was to be sold off some of these days ? ”

“ I—I think so, aunt—but don’t—pray don’t—fret about such things.”

My aunt smiled sadly. “ No, no, my dear ! I’m beyond fretting now. Time was when I’d have worn myself off my feet about such a thing, but I have other matters to think of now. I’m going fast, my dear ! ”

“ Where to, Kate ? ” cried my father, waking up with a start.

“ To the other world, Harry,” my aunt replied, with solemn earnestness.

“ Nonsense, Kate ! don’t talk so wildly—you are worth two gone people yet.”

My aunt shook her head. “ It’s truth I tell you, Harry—like it or not. Now listen to me, both of you. You know that miniature of my father, set with jewels—Elinor, my child ! you know the little drawer where it is, in my bureau ? ”

“ Yes, aunt—”

“ But what on earth do you mean, Kate,” exclaimed my father.

"I'll tell you that. You will take it to-morrow to some respectable jeweller—mind, I say respectable, so that he'll not cheat you—and get the setting taken off."

"And what for, pray?"

"Why, I want you to have a decent month's mind--as many priests as you can get together—and you must make each of them a handsome offering."

My father cleared his voice before he ventured to ask, "Do you think I'd have neglected that, Kate? Or do you suppose I can't afford it without defacing a *Preston* relic? Why, only think,"—he endeavored to disguise his real feelings beneath an appearance of levity,—“such an insult offered to the family would be quite enough to make every soul of them start from their graves. What! sell the jewels off a Preston's portrait—and that Preston our own father! Are you in your senses, Kate?"

"I am, Harry, perfectly sane, I assure you. It is now that I *am* in my senses. Within sight of the gates of death, all worldly distinctions fade away and are no more seen. Standing before the judgment-seat, what is a Preston more than any one else?" She paused, raised her eyes to heaven, and her lips moved as in inward prayer. My father and I were both awed by the solemnity of her tone, and the sudden change effected in her mind. Neither of us could utter a word. My aunt went on: "Faith, not family, will avail before God, and good works he will demand from us, not honors or titles. Brother, and you, my precious Elinor! I have scandalized you, it may be, by my foolish pride of family, and

many a cut I have given to her who is now, I trust, in the glory of heaven,—for all that, I ask your pardon, and hope you'll remember me in your prayers ; indeed, my heart was never hard or cruel, though I did sometimes act as if it was. May the Lord forgive me my sins ! ”

By this time we were both in tears, my father covering his face with his hands, and weeping like a very child. My aunt endeavored to console us with many kind words, but firmly insisted on having my father's promise to dispose of the setting of the miniature next day, according to her desire. The promise was reluctantly given.

“And now, Elinor,” said my aunt, turning with a pleased smile to me, “you must take the world on your shoulders when I'm gone. You're very young, my child, to be tied down to the care of a house, but you must do your duty—there's no one else for it.”

My answer was prevented by the entrance of the nurse, and my father soon after left the room. That was our last conversation with poor Aunt Kate. In the course of the following day she became delirious, and so continued until within a few hours of her death, when she had barely strength to take leave of us all. One of her last acts was to have all the servants brought into the room, and, although she could hardly speak, she held out her hand to each, and requested them one and all to pray for her.

“I ask your pardon,” she said, or rather tried to say “if I ever hurt your feelings in any way.”

A chorus of lamentation was the answer. "Oh! oh! oh! Miss Preston, dear, sure you never did! God knows you were always good and kind to us—barrin' the bit of pride, an' sure that was only natural."

"May the Lord receive you in glory, Miss!" sobbed Larry the groom; "sure it's lonesome we'll be without you. An' that's jist what I was sayin' to your old favorite, brown Paudeen, abroad this mornin'. 'Paudeen,' says I to him, 'the ould mistress—Lord bless me! what am I sayin' at all—the mistress—Miss Kate, I mane—is goin' to leave us; you'll have nobody now, Paudeen,' says I, 'except poor Larry Monaghan to praise your fine paces. Ah then, Miss, dear!'"—he was suddenly interrupted by my father, who, placing his hand on his mouth, pointed towards the door. My aunt had swooned away, and we all thought her dead. We could hear the other servants administering verbal correction to poor Larry in subdued whispers as they descended the back stairs, but we were all too desolate at the moment to relish or even notice anything ludicrous.

My aunt was not dead, but she died that evening, and her death was, as it were, a renewal of our still greater loss. No one ever dreamed that poor Aunt Kate would be so missed as she somehow was. The very eccentricities, or, as it were, singularities of her character, which had, in life, knocked against every one, were now only remembered as so many agreeable traits in a disposition otherwise warm and genial, and every body seemed tacitly to acknowledge that the good old lady was all the more loveable for her quaint, old-fashioned

ways, and little harmless foibles. Peace be to her!—she was herself most exemplary in her charitable remembrance of the dead, and many a fervent prayer was offered up for herself when it came to her turn to disappear from mortal eye. During the three nights of the wake, the house was crowded with friends and well-wishers of almost every class. Up stairs, my father and George presided over the hospitable arrangements, aided by Maria Delany and one or two other friends of the family, while the world below, consisting of former servants, male and female, the various tradesmen and working-people, together with beggars not a few, were duly entertained by Larry and his wife Nancy, who had been our cook for more years than she cared to own now that she found herself in the decline of life. The Rosary was said both above and below about the middle of each night, and it was a thing to be remembered, the sudden cessation of laugh and jest, and all the varied sounds of promiscuous conversation, followed instantly by the deep, full, measured tones of those who answered the Rosary. Above and below, the whole house was simultaneously filled with the voice of prayer—prayer offered up to the throne of grace on behalf of her who slept so tranquilly on her snowy couch, looking fairer and much younger than we had seen her for years and years.

“By the hokey,” said Larry, when, the long prayers being ended, he rose and rubbed his stiffened knees,—“By the hokey, Nancy, we’re all in need of a drop after that. It was as much as ever myself could do to keep my eyes open. Sure enough there’s a temptation on people when

they're at their prayers. I think the ould gentleman below puts lead on our eyelids—bad scran to him for a schemer!—well! here's confusion to him at any rate, and may he never get a claw on any one we wish well! Come now, all of you, drink that toast—don't be mouthin' at it. Bedad!" he added, smacking his lips, as he set down his own empty glass—emptied, as he said, "for the sake of example"—"bedad, now, that's what I call real good: don't beafeared of it, ladies, it's *Kinahan's malt*, you know. Mild as new milk."

Just then Larry was called on for a song, and he executed, accordingly, with much good will, if not with much voice or skill, one of the stirring ballads of the O'Connell era, then in its last and most gloomy days. The song, though lively and patriotic in itself, struck a plaintive chord in the hearts of all within hearing, for times had changed, and the great chief who had so long wielded the nation's energies was now the occupant of a prison—the victim of English jealousy. Before Larry had finished the last stanza, lying back in his chair with legs outstretched and eyes upraised towards the ceiling, he was interrupted by several voices: "Hut, tut, Larry! what sort of a song is that you're givin' us?" "Sure people's hearts are heavy enough and black enough too, without you remindin' us of days that'll may-be never come again." "Can't you give us a touch of love or murder, Larry?" "Something sorrowful in honor of the ould madam!" This last call was from Susy, the apple-woman, who was there in her glory.

All this and more was heard distinctly up stairs, the

doors being all open on such an occasion as that, and many a smile was exchanged, and many a curt, sly remark, *adpropos* to what was passing in the kitchen. Various little by-plays were also going on among "the quality," not the least amusing being Arthur Dillon's persevering attentions to Miss Delany, who still "gave him the cold shoulder," as some of the company whispered to each other.

Thus did the three nights pass away, the three long nights that would have been so dismal, the loneliness of death half removed by the cheerful presence of so many cordial, sympathizing friends. On the morning of the funeral, a temporary altar was fitted up in the front parlor, and my aunt's spiritual Director offered up the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of her soul, in presence of the crowd who had come to attend the funeral.

That was the last great funeral that ever took place in our family. From that time the star of our fortune was on the wane, and the number of our friends began to diminish wonderfully. Carry was sent to Cabra for her education, and what little housekeeping was to be done, devolved on my inexperienced self. The common herd of visitors had deserted us, and some of our best and truest friends were scattered hither and thither by the wayward course of human affairs. One was sent as consul to the south of Europe, others were attending parliamentary duties in London, and one or two were, like ourselves, gradually sinking in the social scale. For them the care of their own broken fortunes was more than sufficient. Many an ancient and honored

family fell from its high estate in Ireland, during those years of commercial depression—that dismal lull which followed the extinction of the great Repeal movement, and ushered in the Famine. It was a time of hopeless, joyless, public despondency ; and every family in the kingdom, from high to low, shared more or less in the general depression.

It was just about the time when the greatest of living Irishmen—the mighty enchanter whose wand had waked all Ireland from the sleep of ages, set out,—a frail and drooping and broken-hearted old man,—on a pilgrimage of love to the City of the Apostles. The metropolitan city was overshadowed with gloom, and the hearts of its usually gay inhabitants were chilled and heavy. Few there were who escaped the contagion, but of that number was our lively friend Maria Delany. Her father had died the year before, and it was found, contrary to all expectation, that his affairs were in anything but a prosperous condition. Maria, so far from being an heiress, was found almost penniless when the estate was wound up ; and yet the light-hearted girl was as gay and mercurial as ever, saving the natural sorrow for her father's death. And, peace be to his ashes ! worthy Mr. Delany was no better than he should be to his wife and daughter. He was a hard, shrewd man—a regular skinflint, who had loved money “not wisely, but too well”—a fact which made the final announcement as to the state of his affairs one of the greatest enigmas that had for years come before the Dublin public. Poor Maria los; ground amazingly in the world of fashion.

It is true she kept herself aloof from it altogether, out of respect to the memory of her parents; but under other circumstances, it would have pursued her into any retirement she might have chosen. Had she still been an heiress, even though Mahomet did not go to the mountain, the mountain would have gone to Mahomet; but the attraction no longer existed, and, for all her fashionable friends and quondam admirers cared, "that dear, sweet, lively creature, Miss Delany," might have betaken herself to Jericho, or any other out-of-the-way place where her deep mourning would not cast a spectral shade on their worldly pleasures. She had gone to board in a private family out at Rathmines, and report said that she was actually teaching for her living. Poor Maria! That report set the seal on her reprobation, and she was consigned to the region of utter darkness, where the smiles of fashion never penetrated. There were still one or two families of her former friends with whom Maria kept up an intimacy, and ours was one of these.

The year of Maria's mourning had just expired, when who should pop into our drawing-room one fine summer's day but my lady herself, and who, of all others, should she have with her, but Arthur Dillon, who, to do him justice, looked more the man than we had ever seen him. The moustache had disappeared from his smooth upper lip, and his features seemed actually to have attained fuller and more masculine dimensions. We could hardly believe our eyes, and Maria laughed at our visible bewilderment till the tears ran down her

cheeks. Dillon, too, smiled in a way that neither Carry nor I could understand.

"Do you know what brought us here this morning?" said Maria, at length, when she had succeeded in composing her features.

"I really can't tell," I replied, "but I should think it was something very funny."

"So it is, child—isn't it, Arthur?—now open your ears wide, Elinor, and you, *ma petite* Carry!—we've come to ask you to our wedding!"

"To your wedding!"

"Just so: we're to be married next week—on Tuesday, I believe. Why do you stare so, you strange girl? don't you think I have kept this poor youth long enough in suspense? There's no knowing what he might do if I tampered longer with his feelings—eh, Arthur?"

"Well, but Maria—I never thought——"

"Of course you didn't—who asked you to think anything about it? Now listen to me, girls!—we're going to have the affair very private—very private, indeed. There will be none invited but your family—and old O'Shaughnessy of course, on George's account—the Dil lons—and that's all—isn't it, Arthur?"

"Just as you like, my dear Maria!—I have told you so repeatedly."

There was an unnatural tremor in poor Arthur's voice, and a flush on his cheek that showed his inward agitation. The fact is, he seemed as one in a pleasing dream, and evidently feared to speak or move lest the

blissful illusion should vanish ; that Maria should ever speak rationally or condescendingly to *him*—to him who had so long been the butt of her keen sarcasm and laughter-loving propensity ; above all, that she should smile graciously on his year-long suit, and actually permit him to hope, was something so very unexpected that steadier minds than Dillon's might have been staggered. And Maria lorded it over him with a vengeance, but still in that easy, good-natured way that no one could resent, and he least of all. The best of it was, that she drew very freely on Arthur's purse while making her preparations. It is true he gave her in the first place a check for a considerable sum, but she managed to dispose of it with so much ease that even I could not help expressing my surprise, when, taking me into another room on that particular morning, she told me of it.

“ Why, Maria, you have not spent all *that*, surely ? ”

“ Bless your heart, my dear ! to be sure I have. Arthur can well afford it. Now, aren't you dying to know how all this came to pass in so short a time ? ” I acknowledged my curiosity.

“ Well ! you know, or must know, that of all the candidates who sought my hand before the time of my father's death—may the Lord have mercy on him ! Arthur Dillon was the only one that persevered through thick and thin. All the others fairly deserted—yes, every soul of them ; and what am I to do ? Unless I make up my mind ‘ to die an old maid,’ as the song says, why, I must e'en take what I can get. Besides,” she added,

still in the same bantering tone, "I have been so long teasing the poor fellow who clung to me so pertinaciously, that it became a second nature to me, and I really never could get along without him. Poor Arthur!" she looked at him as she said this, and her eyes, moist with tears, told of a much deeper feeling in his regard than the levity of her speech denoted. I could not then understand all this, but I have often thought of it since—and little wonder it was that the poor fellow's devotion, surviving fortune, position, nay! youth itself, should touch a heart so warm and generous as Maria's. She had learned, by dear-bought experience, that his foppery and apparent egotism went no further than the surface, and that there were qualities rare and precious hidden far down in the depths of his heart, which few gave him credit for possessing at all.

My father was both amused and pleased when he heard the news. "Well!" said he, "if that isn't a strange fancy of Maria's she never had one, and we have seen her have a reasonable number of odd fancies. Still I think she might do worse. The Dillons are well off, and poor Arthur may get to be more of a man when he has a sensible wife. That shaving of his upper lip is a good sign. He'll come to his senses, never fear."

On the following Tuesday Maria Delany became the wife of Arthur Dillon, and Carry and I were bridesmaids. The wedding was held at the Dillon mansion, and to do the old couple justice, they were as cordially attentive to the bride as though she could have brought thousands to the family coffers. The wedding-party was small but

we l chosen, and we had a right merry day of it. We all drove out to Bray, and lunched *à la champêtre* with in sight of the blue sea-wave. Returning to town for a six o'clock dinner, we found Mr. O'Shaughnessy in luxurious possession of an arm-chair near one of the windows, and the old gentleman was apparently in excellent humor. According as the dinner-hour approached his hilarity seemed to increase, until it actually reached a state of effervescence. It seemed strange to us that he kept watching the entrance of the few additional guests with almost feverish impatience, and when at last Mrs. Dillon, senior, said, "Well, now! I believe that's all!" Shaugh (as he was technically called) started up and thrust his right hand into his vest pocket with a very oratorical air.

"Are you sure you expect no one else, Mrs. Dillon?" he asked, abruptly.

"Quite sure, Mr. O'Shaughnessy."

"Well! in that case," said the man of law, "we have a little business to transact."

"But bless my soul, Shaugh!" put in my father, "is this a proper time for business? why, man, dinner will be on the table—I hope—in five minutes."

"Even so—business can't wait, as the saying is. Arthur Dillon! you are aware that I was legal adviser to the late Mr. Delany—rest his soul in peace!"

"I know it, sir," said Arthur, looking very sheepish. He evidently feared that something bad was coming. He looked at his father, and his father looked at him. Maria and the lawyer too, exchanged glances, and both

smiled. Curiosity was depicted as plainly as could be on every face, but no one spoke until the lawyer, having leisurely surveyed us all through his gold spectacles as though enjoying our surprise by anticipation, took from his pocket a very legal-looking document which he said he would read for our special enlightenment. This document proved to be the will of the late Mr. Delany, which, after various legacies, and a bequest to his parish church, secured to his daughter Maria the sum of ten thousand pounds, being the residue of his fortune.

Various exclamations of surprise escaped from all present. People could hardly believe their ears. As for Arthur Dillon, he looked anything at all but exhilarated, and I really believe that he was sorry to find Maria still an heiress. Mr. Dillon, senior, looked very hard at the lawyer, shrewd man of business as he was, being much inclined to view the whole as a practical joke, but the lawyer nodded to him in a friendly, confidential way, as though he had said, "All right, old friend!" Whereupon the new-made father-in-law took out his snuff-box and handed it to his legal friend, with a countenance expressive of unlimited satisfaction. Maria herself, tired, as she said, of being stared at, drew me after her to the deep recess of a window, telling Arthur, in a very authoritative manner, to stay where he was. The discomfited bridegroom was fain to smile, and resume the seat from which he had risen with unusual alacrity. Maria's departure was the signal, it appeared, for unbridling the company's tongues, for there was an instant clatter of voices, each one giving vent to his or her surprise in all

the various notes of the gamut. Maria pressed the arm which she had drawn within her own, and whispered me to listen. "I have just left them to talk the wonder over," said she; "and besides, I couldn't have kept from laughing another minute, they were all in such a comical state of bewilderment. Only listen, Nell!"

"So Delany's money was safe and sound after all!" said one.

"Small thanks to it for that," said another; "never was money better taken care of. Not a man in Dublin knew the value of a penny better than the same Luke Delany."

"I never *could* understand," cried a third, "how Luke's affairs came to be in a bad way, so this makes it all straight."

"But what a sly trick it was for Miss Delany to play. Didn't she do us all nicely—herself and Shaugh? I tell you what it is, Shaugh, I never thought you had so much mischief in you!"

The man of parchment chuckled in a way peculiar to himself. "Ha! ha! ha!—haven't spent five-and-twenty years about the Four Courts for nothing. Mrs. Arthur Dillon very extravagant in her purchases—eh, ladies?—drawing too freely on the matrimonial purse that was to be!—ha! ha!—well for Master Arthur he didn't keep the strings too close—if he had, self and client wouldn't have dropped in this golden luck-penny. A useful lesson, we hope, to all suitors for ladies' hands in general! Free and easy, gents, free and easy—that's the way to win them; shave the upper lip like Christian men, and don't

affect foreign manners, which interpreted means puppyism."

"Dinner on the table!" said the butler, throwing open the door with an official jerk. Mr. Dillon, senior, instantly made his bow to Maria under the curtains, my father offered his arm to her graciously-smiling mother-in-law, while Arthur took my hand with something of his former affectation, and down we marched to dinner, the others pairing off according to the good pleasure of the gentlemen.

During the time of dinner Arthur was very rational indeed. It was only once or twice that he made a little excursion into the land of fable, but Pegasus was now bridled, and had his wings clipped. Maria had become an interested party, and instead of drawing Arthur out, as was her wont in times past for the amusement of the company, she now adroitly turned the conversation into another channel. Many of the company saw her object, and cheerfully assisted in carrying it out, so that Arthur escaped with flying colors.

"Well!" said Maria to me, when we found ourselves snugly seated together in a corner of the large drawing-room, shaded by a high-backed chair,—"Well! don't you think Arthur is improving already?"

"I believe he is," I replied, with a smile.

"Aye! but why do you laugh?—depend upon it, there is a jewel within that casket, and with God's help I mean to bring it out in all its native lustre. The little crust of affectation must and shall disappear."

"May God assist you! you have done much already!"

"God *will* assist me—I have no doubt of it. Arthur has an excellent heart, and, what is a still greater security, he has a profound reverence for religion. At the worst of times no one ever heard him speak lightly of anything connected with religion. Had such been the case, he had never been my husband, for, after all, there is no trusting man or woman who has not a proper respect for the things that are of God."

Just then I was summoned to sing "The Light of Other Days," then and for long after one of the reigning favorites in the arena of vocal music. Alas! that such songs should ever become "antiquated," or banished from the drawing-room at the bidding of that addle-headed monster—that pretentious fool—in modern parlance yclept *fashion!* It seems to me that in this respect the Dubliners are far ahead of many others. Songs there retain their hold on the heart, and wield dominion over the charmed circle more in proportion to their merit both as regards poetry and music; and you will seldom find a noble song with a nobler air dismissed the Dublin salons, and huddled away in corners among old neglected music, for the sole reason that it is "too old;"—the very words are suggestive of some lisping dandy, or some singing-bird in petticoats called "a musical young lady," neither of them having brains enough or taste enough to appreciate true poetry or true music. The citizens of Dublin can, as I have said, relish a good song, even though it be none of the newest; and yet, strange to say, there is no city (not even excepting London or Paris) whose judgment is more highly re-

spected by the musical artists of every age. It is, I believe, an indisputable fact, that the singer or the actor who finds favor in the eyes of the Dublin critics, is pretty sure to succeed in any capital either of Europe or America. All this *apropos* to songs and ballads, connecting links as they are between different periods of existence :

“ Old songs! old songs!—how well I sung
Your varied airs with childish tongue,
When breath and spirit, free and light,
Caroll’d away from morn till night.

“ Old songs! old songs —how thick ye come,
Telling of childhood and of home,
When home forged links in memory’s chain
Too strong for time to break in twain,
When home was all that home should be,
And held the vast, rich world for me!

* * * * *

“ Old songs! old songs!—how ye bring back
The fairest paths in mortal track!
I see the merry circle spread,
Till watchman’s notice warned to bed;
When one rude boy would loiter near,
And whisper, in a well-pleased ear,—
‘ Come, mother, sit before we go,
And sing John Anderson, my Jo.’

“ The ballad still is breathing round,
But other voices yield the sound;
Strangers possess the household room,
The mother lieth in the tomb,
And that blithe boy who praised her song
Sleepeth as soundly and as long.

"Old songs! old songs!—I should not sigh—
 Joys of the earth on earth must die;
 But spectral forms will sometimes start
 Within the caverns of the heart,
 Haunting the lone and darkened cell
 Where, warm in life, they used to dwell.

"Hope, youth, love, home—each human tie
 That binds we know not how or why—
 All, all that to the soul belongs,
 Is closely mingled with 'old songs.'
 Ah! who shall say the ballad line
 That stirs the soul is not divine!
 And where the heart that would not dare
 To place such songs beside the prayer!"

—Old Newspaper.

It might have been a month after Maria's marriage, when my father one night asked me, as he often did, to play and sing to him. He drew his chair close to the piano, and placing Carry on an ottoman at his knee, he said, "Now, George, take your flute and accompany Elinor—it's some time since I have heard you play together. I don't know what's coming over me at all—I just feel as if my heart was made of lead. But, God help me! sure it's little wonder I'd be dull and down-hearted! Go on, children!—give me something lively. Carry, my pet! sit over close, and lay your head on my knee. Perhaps it's not long you'll have me—" and then he sighed, and fondly stroked the silken tresses that hung dishevelled over his knee. George and I exchanged glances, for we had just been saying to each other a little before that there must be something over us, our hearts

were all so heavy. Still we affected to laugh, and George darted at once into a cheerful prelude. He was suddenly stopped by my father with a request to give him something more plaintive.

"I find your merry music only makes me worse," said he; "I'll tell you what you'll sing, Nelly—you know Moore's words to 'Lochaber'—

‘When cold in the earth lies the friend thou hast loved.’"

We began it at once, but had hardly reached the middle of the last stanza, when George, suddenly stopping, said, in a whisper, "My father's asleep, Elinor."

So he was. Leaning back in his chair, he slept soundly, so soundly, indeed, that, by a strange impulse, I leant over him to see whether he still breathed, and was much relieved to find that he did. Carry instantly arose, her eyes red with weeping, and we three stood together, talking in whispers of the ruddy hue that was gone for ever from our father's face, and noting, as loving hearts only can, the ravages of care and sorrow on features but lately so smooth and fresh and placid.

While we were yet speaking, my father woke up with a start: "Bless my soul, children! I believe I have been dreaming, yet surely I can't have been asleep? Why, I thought poor Kate was here, dressed as we saw her that night in her odd-looking shining dress: she told me Teresa wanted me—Lord bless my soul! aren't they both dead and in their graves? wasn't it a strange dream? and, by the bye, I thought Kate had the

Preston arms painted right on the front of a certain mitre-like head-dress which she wore—ha! ha! I suppose she *does* keep up family-state in the other world—if she can she will, at any rate!"

This ludicrous idea of my poor aunt's being armorially enblazoned in the world of spirits gave us an opportunity of echoing my father's faint laugh, which we did with forced gayety.

"By the bye, children!" said my father, "is not this the very chair in which we found poor Kate, in her spectral costume?" George answered in the affirmative, whereupon my father rose, and said, with a sigh, as he moved towards the door,—

"It will soon have other, and, it may be, sadder memories connected with it. Don't part with it, children, do as you may!—Nonsense, now! what do you cry for? Upon my word! you're three great babies, nothing better! because your old father is in low spirits, you must all be in low spirits too. Fie! fie! George! you'll be head of the house some of these days, and this is a poor specimen of your manhood! I think we had all better go to bed—but stay, Elinor! go, like a good girl, and get Nancy to make me a tumbler of punch—sweet, strong, and warm, you know. Bring it up to my room, and I'll take it after I lie down. I feel as though I wanted something to warm me, and it's strange, too, for the weather is warm enough—I suppose it's the beginning of old age!" He smiled faintly, and George tried hard to get up a laugh, but it would not do. He felt more like crying, as he afterwards told me. And yet poor George used to be the merriest soul alive.

"Good-night, Nelly!" said my father, as he turned to the wall to dispose himself for sleep; "to-morrow, please God! we'll go and see Emily, and if the next day is fine, we may drive out to Clongowes—I think it would do my heart good to see *all* my children together once more. Good-night—pray for me." Murmuring a faint response I hastily closed the door, for my tears would no longer be restrained. It was the first time my father had ever asked me to pray for him—at least, since the day of my first communion, when he did it in a half-jocular way that was anything but impressive. He had never been what is called a religious man. It is true he went regularly to his duty at Christmas and Easter, and was always a stout defender of Catholic dogmas when assailed in his presence. He was, at heart, firmly attached to our holy faith, and never shrank, either, from professing his submission to the Church; but still he was far from being a practical Christian, and this request, made, too, with unmistakable sincerity, affected me very strangely. Long after I went to bed, I lay awake thinking of the sorrowful change so visible in my father, and praying with all my heart that if it were the will of God, we might not be deprived of our only parent. Vain, vain my prayers! When I did fall asleep, I must have slept long and very soundly, for the room was full of bright sunshine when I awoke with a start—roused by a wild shriek which echoed through the house. Carry was gone from my side, and my first undefined fear was for her. Throwing on a loose morning-dress I hurried out into the lobby, and there I met

my poor sister rushing like one crazed, from my father's room, her face like that of a corpse. Before I could articulate a word, she took me by the arm and dragged me in, then pointed to the bed, and fell fainting in a chair beside it. And well she might, for there lay the lifeless body of our good kind father, stark and cold, the eyes nearly wide open, and the color of the face so little changed that you could hardly believe him dead. Calm and still he lay, the very bed-clothes undisturbed above him. Before five minutes every soul in the house was assembled round the bed, and in ten minutes more the doctor bent over my poor father, his whole frame trembling with emotion, and he literally gasping for breath.

Oh, my God ! how eagerly did we three desolate orphans watch the face of our old friend, as, raising his head with a heavy sigh, he took hold of my father's wrist to feel for a pulse which was stilled for evermore. After a few seconds he laid the hand down very gently, and, motioning to the terrified servants to leave the room, he took one of my hands and one of Carry's, and pressing them between his own he said, in a voice hardly articulate :

“ May the Lord in heaven comfort you this day, my poor, poor children ! ”

Upon this all burst into tears, and George only could command words : “ Oh, doctor ! doctor ! you don't think he's dead—he can't be dead, doctor !—it's only a fit—won't you—won't you try—have some other doctors !—try something ! ”

"My dear George, it's no earthly use—only heaping expense on yourselves, and I fear you've little money to spare," he added, in a lower tone. "All the doctors in Dublin couldn't bring back the soul into that body. He's been dead some hours!"

"Well! we'll try at any rate," said George, somewhat tartly; "take the horse, Larry!" he called out in the passage, "and run for Dr. H——, and I'll go for Dr. T——."

"Very well, George, very well!" said the worthy doctor. "I'm content, my poor boy!—it'll satisfy your mind at any rate. Come with me, girls, to the next room!" But neither Carry nor I would stir from the spot—a strange kind of fascination was upon us, and though we trembled from head to foot, and could neither of us utter a word, we threw ourselves on our knees beside the bed, and clasped our hands in helpless anguish, our eyes fixed on the ghastly dead face before us, looking all the more ghastly for its life-like hue and staring eyes. Ah, it was a dreadful sight—a sight never to be forgotten.

It is needless to say that the two eminent physicians, who arrived within a quarter of an hour, did but confirm the melancholy report of our own doctor. Then came, as if to crown our affliction, the dreadful thought that our father had been summoned to the bar of divine justice without any preparation, no sacraments to cleanse or fortify his soul, no priest to bless his departure. Oh! the misery of those hours when, the doctors being gone, we were left alone with our own poor household, now

reduced to Larry and his tidy spouse, Nancy. Bewildered and confounded, we none of us knew what to do, and I know not what we should have done, had it not been for the blunt kindness and the practical good sense of Mr. O'Shaughnessy, who proved himself really *a friend in need*. The Dillons, too, did what they could to comfort us, but with these exceptions we had surprisingly few to keep us company. The first day there were some half dozen or so, and so on during the night. Alas! how different a wake it was from that of my aunt. Then we youngsters could not understand the reason why so few attended, but we understood it well enough since. Had we had more experience of the world we should have known that worldly friends, like rats, desert falling houses; and that now, when the head of the house was gone, there was no great attention due to a family of orphans who had no power to befriend any one. So the first night had passed dismally away, every hour seeming as long as two. Early in the morning, one of the first sounds we heard was Larry's voice, in angry expostulation with some one on the stairs. George immediately went out to ascertain the cause of the tumult, and the noise soon ceased; but when my poor brother returned to the wake-room, after the lapse of twenty minutes or so, there was an angry flush on his pallid brow, and a strange lurid light in his eyes, already red and swollen. After a little he beckoned me from the room, and said to me:

"Elinor, my poor sister! don't be surprised at seeing strange men move through the house."

"Why, George, what do you mean?" I asked, my heart sinking with fear.

"Don't be alarmed, Nell," he returned, with a strange, ghastly smile, his lip quivering convulsively; "it's only two bailiffs, that are in the house taking an inventory. They're sent by my father's creditors to seize our goods and chattels. I wouldn't have told you, poor girl! only it wasn't possible to keep it from you. We must get those people out of that room as soon as possible, under some pretence, for the bailiffs will soon pay it a visit. I wonder now," he added, in the same strange, hoarse voice, "would it keep them from going in *there*, were we to tell them that my poor father died of typhus, or something very infectious?—eh, Nell?"

"Ah! George! George! don't talk so!—don't, for the love of God! I know you wouldn't say what wasn't the truth, and on such a subject too—and yet you're in no humor for jesting. God help us this day! what are we to do at all?" and I wrung my hands in tearless anguish.

Poor George could give me little comfort, but what he could he did. Maria Dillon, and Arthur, too, were more than kind. No sooner did they learn that our things were under seizure than Arthur hurried off to Mr. O'Shaughnessy, and both went together to try and arrange matters, so that the bailiffs should be withdrawn. This they found impracticable, as the sum due for rent alone was very considerable,—much more than, under the circumstances, Arthur could reasonably think of advancing; and nothing less would appease the inexorable creditor, who had been for years and years the easiest

of landlords to my father. He seemed to have got a nervous fear of our unfortunate chattels being spirited away, and he left in the lurch, as he elegantly expressed it. So the bailiffs remained in undisputed possession of the house during the three days and nights of the wake. If Larry had got his way, their triumph would not have been so easy ; for his fingers were itching he said, "to send that black a-vised chap in the hall head foremost into the street." "And may be the fellow up stairs wouldn't follow him in double-quick time !" said poor Larry, "if you'd only let me at them, Master George,—now do, sir!—why, I declare to you, that woman of mine can hardly keep her hands off them, let alone *me!*"

My brother had some difficulty in persuading the faithful servitor that any attack on the bailiffs would only add to the misfortunes of the family ; and this being once impressed on Larry's mind, he promptly conveyed the intelligence to Nancy, and both heroically resolved "to let them fall into other hands."

Alfred, who was then near the end of his noviciate, came with one of the fathers to visit us during those dreary days, and I remember we were all highly offended at what we considered his coldness. We could not understand the sustaining power of religion when it wields dominion over the soul. I have now little doubt that Alfred loved my father as sincerely as any of us, and that his sorrow was to the full as great as ours, especially when he found that the death of that dear parent had been both "sudden and unprovided;" but

at the time I thought him cold and heartless, and George, I believe, told him as much of *his* mind. Poor Alfred! he only smiled—very faintly, too—and said, “Do you think so, George?” Alas! his own face was, at the moment, as colorless as that of the corpse—now laid in its coffin—and his voice, when he spoke, had a tremulous tone, broken very, very often by a short, asthmatic cough. So he only said, “Do you think so, George? —well, perhaps I *am* unfeeling.” He turned to the bed, on which the coffin was laid, and stood for a few moments regarding the corpse in silence. He was in the shade of the door, which was open, but I saw a tear trickling down his pale cheek, and that tear melted the ice that had been gathering on my heart. I went up to him, and took his hand and squeezed it hard, hard. He turned and met my eye, and his whole face was lit up with a momentary gleam of sunshine. The feeling, I suppose, was too natural, too earthly for that pure world-detached spirit, for he instantly resumed the grave, collected mien now habitual with him, and told Father B—— he was ready to go. Having taken a kind leave of us who were still in the flesh, he bent for one brief moment over the fastly-changing remains of our good father,—a tremor shook his whole frame, doubtless as he thought of the immortal soul which had so lately “shuffled off that mortal coil,”—but no audible sound escaped him. Before any of us could get out a word, he and his revered companion had glided from the room like beings from another world, cold, and calm, and pulseless—at least to all human appearance. I can

hardly describe the effect of this visit. On me it had a soothing and at the same time a beneficial effect. Such a picture of early detachment from the world in a brother whom I had known but lately so full of human affection, so wrapped up, as it were, in the little circle that formed *his* world,—such a picture had an indescribable charm for me, and I felt myself all the better for it. But George was very, very angry,—I believe he hardly ever forgave Alfred,—and Carry pursed up her pretty lips, and said Alfred had grown so cold that she couldn't have thought it possible. He cared nothing about poor papa,—that was plain. Little did they know of the workings of that young heart which had so early schooled itself to conformity with the evangelical counsels.

Next day we followed the mortal remains of my father to their last resting-place. His grave was made beside my mother's, in Glassnevin, and not far from the tomb of John Philpot Curran. How closely we three orphans clung together,—how tenderly George supported each drooping sister as we stood to see the narrow house filled up. I well remember how hard it was for me to realize to myself that it was *my father* whom I saw thus covered up in the dark, lonely grave. He whom we had seen so full of life, so cheerful and so busy, but one short week before. Ah! death! death! how wondrous, how absolute is thy power, fell destroyer that thou art!

The funeral was small, very small, considering the prominent position which my father held. This at the time gave us little trouble; but now, when I look back on the events of my past life through the softening haze

of time, I feel as though the ingratitude of our quondam friends *ought* to have made me sick of the world. But I was young, and the hollowness of worldly friendship was something which I could not realize, let its proofs be ever so manifest. It is only the sad experience of years that can strip the world of its specious veil,—the young heart can not go beyond appearances, and they are very fair, very prepossessing, indeed !

The Dillons insisted on our going home with them, but George and myself both felt as though it would only make us worse. "The old house at home" was not to be left to its loneliness so very soon, with all its ancestral furniture,—every article and item of which was now an honored memento of "the loved and lost." Besides the bailiffs were there, and we did not choose to leave poor Larry and Nancy to utter loneliness ; so *home* we went. Oh ! what a home it was !

Tea was brought up at the usual hour, and we sat around the table, not to eat or drink, but to weep in silence,—none of us could even speak of our loss. All at once the door-bell rang, and a cheerful voice was heard in the hall talking to Nancy. All the way up the stairs, clatter, clatter went the tongue,—a heavy foot stumped along the passage,—a knock at the drawing-room door,—and in came Mr. O'Shaughnessy, all flushed and breathless after his long walk, as he took good care to tell us after he had established himself in a chair at the table beside Carry.

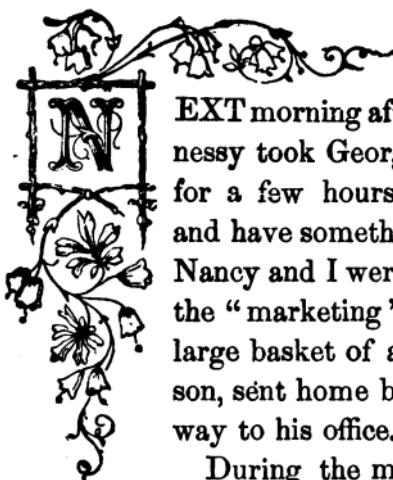
"Humph ! what's this I see ?—crying, eh ? Dry your eyes every one of you, now George, I'm really

ashamed of you!—don't let me see another tear,—mind that now!—I'll have no such nonsense here!—that's all about it! Give me a cup of tea, Elinor,—that's it,—hand me that bread and butter, Carry,—thank you, sweetheart!—ha! ha!—I used to call you 'little wifie,'—I think you *must* come and keep house for me *now!*"

Thus did the good man rattle on; it is true he did most of the talking himself, except that George now and then put in some stray words, but his presence was worth gold to us. Sometimes we could not help smiling at the quaint drollery of his remarks. After tea, just when we began to fear that he was thinking of going, he established himself in the memorable chair so doubly haunted with ghostly memories, and declared his intention of staying all night. This cheered us more than a little, for the comical face of our old friend was pleasant to look upon, and the dismal shadows which follow in the train of death, and sit brooding over the stricken household, took wings to themselves and flew away at the sound of his merry voice.



CHAPTER IV.



EXT morning after breakfast Mr. O'Shaughnessy took George off with him to his office for a few hours, charging us to be sure and have something nice for dinner. While Nancy and I were just consulting about how the "marketing" was to be got, in came a large basket of all the delicacies of the season, sent home by the worthy lawyer on his way to his office.

During the morning, Nancy came to ask me if I would be good enough to go and look over a letter that Larry had just been writing to a brother of his in America. "He's been at it, off and on, this fortnight, Miss," said Nancy, "an' he just finished it this mornin'. Little thoughts he had when he began it of the news he'd have to put in before it was done."

"But why does he want me to read it, Nancy?" I asked, as we went down the kitchen stairs.

"Well! to tell you the truth, Miss Elinor," said Nancy, with a grin that reached from ear to ear, "he can't make head or tail of it himself, an' both him an' me'd like to hear what's in it, before it goes."

If it had been at another time, I would have enjoyed this amazingly, and even as it was I could not help smiling. I found poor Larry in a doleful plight at the kitchen-table, with a newspaper spread out under his letter to save the table from the inky abomination so visible on his own ten fingers, and even on his mouth. He looked disheartened, too, and not a little puzzled.

"Why, what's the matter, Larry?" I inquired, affecting not to know.

"Well! it's this bit of a letter, Miss! I'd be thankful to you if you'd read it for me,—an', indeed, I don't like to ask you, on account of the sorrowful news that's in it. But sure, Miss Elinor dear! you'll not mind it! It's what we must all come to, an' I hope it's a happy change for the poor master, any how!"

Larry's admonition was quite superfluous; for, after a careful investigation, and many fruitless attempts, I was forced to declare that it was all Greek and Latin to me. Larry's hieroglyphics went far beyond my skill, and I told him so very gravely.

"Lord bless me," cried Nancy, her big round eyes protruding far from their sockets, "what sort of a letter is it, when even Miss Elinor can't make out what's in it?"

"Never mind!" said Larry, beginning with great coolness to fold the precious document, "never mind, honey!—we'll put it in the post any how, plase God! They say they're the mischief at reading letters in America!"

I had some difficulty in persuading Larry to let me

write a letter for him. It was too much trouble, he said; especially as I had trouble enough on my mind already. But at last he gave in, having furnished me, with Nancy's help, with the various items of news which he wished to convey to his brother Owen, in Canada.

Day after day passed away,—heavily and slowly enough, it is true, but still they passed. The auction was at length over. The furniture, so carefully selected and so well preserved through many a changeful year,—each article vested with its own varied associations,—all, all was gone, scattered abroad through scores of households, where their value was merely that of "second-hand furniture." Mr. O'Shaughnessy, however, had managed to secure "the old arm-chair" which my father had charged us to keep. Oh! the breaking up of a family,—especially if death has brought it about,—what is there in all this wide, cold world so dreary, so heart-rending! Many a time during those melancholy days that it lasted did I wish that I, too, occupied a quiet grave in the family-lot in Glassnevin. Of course, the wish was sinful, and as such duly repressed, but its substance was in my poor sinking heart.

When all was over, and everything sold, we had the additional consolation of being informed that we were very nearly penniless. A matter of fifty pounds fell into our hands, and even that sum we hardly expected. Of this poor George would only take ten pounds to buy himself a decent suit for his mourning, Mr. O'Shaughnessy taking him from that day into a sort of partnership, whereby a reasonable salary was at least secured

to him, and that was the old man's object. The nuns of Cabra insisted on taking Carry to themselves. In vain did she assure them that she "*wouldn't* be a nun," and being then fully eighteen, she had a right to judge for herself, she said. But the good sisters would have her try (knowing well all the time that she had no vocation) so that she might be near Emily in the meantime. This was a great inducement, and poor Carry could not hold out when Emily appealed to her sisterly affection. I, too, was invited by the kind sisters to make their house my own, at least for a time, on the plea that I could help them in the school.

Mrs. Dillon, on the other hand, urged me to spend some time with her, and as George pleaded hard for me to remain near him, I at length consented.

A full year was spent under the hospitable roof of Arthur Dillon, and if the load of sorrow was not removed from my heart, it certainly was not for want of the kindest and most unremitting attention on the part of the whole family. I might, perhaps, except the elder Mrs. Dillon, who, having been raised by her husband's successful speculations, at rather an advanced age, to a position which she had never dreamed of occupying, had never been able to divest herself of the coarse and somewhat boisterous vulgarity which had been through life her prevailing characteristic. On such a nature as hers, the acquisition of wealth has anything but a refining tendency. If they are naturally or habitually vulgar, riches do but make them more vulgar still, and such was the case with the lady in question. Still, under all

that thick crust of vulgar assumption, Mrs. Dillon, senior, had a kind, good heart, and those who knew her best, were disposed to overlook those faults, which were chiefly on the surface, in consideration of the genuine worth which was even studiously, it would seem, concealed within. The misfortunes of our family would undoubtedly have opened a path for myself to Mrs. Dillon's heart, were it not for an unlucky little peculiarity of hers which militated against me. She either had, or affected to have, a profound contempt for what she called "larned people," and however she managed to include me in that honored class, she certainly did so, to my great misfortune. I suppose it was in consequence of my having been brought up at a boarding-school, for good Mrs. Dillon was in the habit of declaring, with characteristic energy, that "them boordin'-schools were fit for nothing only turnin' the heads of young girls : if she had fifty daughters," she used to add, "she wouldn't send one of them to a boordin'-school," nor was there any exception made in these remarks in favor of conventional education. "They're all six-o'-one and half a dozen of the other. Many a fine sensible girl gets spoiled among them. And why wouldn't they ?—sure it's ladies they all want to be—larnin' to play on the piano, and sing songs in Italian, to be sure, and French, and all of them put-of-the-way languages that nobody understands a word of—not even themselves, for all *I* know ; an' then when they come home to their poor old par-ents, it's then they'll turn up their nose at the darning of a stocking or the making-up of a bed, or anything that would

be useful to the family. Ah! if I was their mother, maybe I wouldn't keep them at home altogether and make them learn to work—I'd see them far enough before I'd be payin' out for what *they* ought to do, an' have them sittin' up in the parlor, singin' their *fa-sol-las*. Look at Elinor Preston there," she would generally wind up, "what is *she* good for now?—tell me that!—Maria's bad enough, God knows, but then it pleased Providence to leave her independent, so that she can pay others to do her work. But Elinor, poor girl! hasn't a shilling to jingle on a tombstone."

Here I used to break in, though my heart was bursting, with, "I beg your pardon, my dear Mrs. Dillon! my funds are not quite so low as that. You seem always to forget—"

"Well! well! how long would your poor penny of money last you, if you hadn't friends like us to keep you! Now I want to know what good your fine education does you? Tell me that, now!"

There was no answering this triumphant appeal—Maria and I would exchange glances, the dutiful daughter-in-law would answer as expected, with a forced laugh, "Very true, mother," and poor Elinor Preston would change color, and bend very low over the book or work in her hand. Ah! those were trials at the time—perhaps grievous trials, but now I can view them with a smile when I take into account the heavy balance of genuine, unsophisticated kindness recorded in my heart in favor of that very woman. It is hard to bear malice against the dead. Their little failings, however annoy-

ing they might have been to us at the time, dwindle into nothing, when viewed through the softening haze of years, with the saddening reflection that the strange mixture of good and ill—the being of whom they were a part, is long since mouldered into dust. As that thought takes possession of the mind, how tenderly do we glance over those peculiarities, whether of mind or manner, and fix our sorrowing gaze on the gem whose lustre they once obscured—the sincere and upright mind, the warm, trusting heart!

During this year of my sojourn with the Dillons, I could not help noticing the admirable change which was gradually taking place in Arthur, fully justifying Maria's expectations, sanguine as they were. What penetration of character that girl must have had, now when I come to think of it! Who but herself could ever have seen through the frippery airs wherewith he had so assiduously bedizened himself, leaving it doubtful at times to the cursory observer whether he had even the average run of common sense. This salutary change was perceptible in a thousand little incidents of daily occurrence, and it was amusing to see the sly significance with which Maria—sly enchantress that she was!—challenged my attention to this progressive improvement.

Arthur was one morning stepping out as spruce as ever, but not anything like so dandified, to go to his office, when who should he meet on the very steps but our old acquaintance, Susy Broadigan, her face broad, and red, and comical as ever. She looked rather embarrassed on seeing Arthur, being mindful of certain pas

sages in their former intercourse which were anythirg but favorable to her, she considered. She was greatly surprised, therefore, when her low curtsy was responded to by a very hearty "How d'ye do, Susy?" from the young master of the mansion.

"Why, then, I was often worse, Mr. Arthur, dear," said contented Susy Broadigan, "many thanks to you sir, for askin'. How's the mistress, sir, an' the ould madam, an' your father—the Lord's blessin' on him! it's him that never turns his back on the poor, anyhow—an' sure so sign on him—he wouldn't be what he is the day only for the blessin' o' God, an' the blessin' o' God follys them that has compassion on the poor. Might I make so free as to ask, sir, is Miss Elinor Preston athin this fine mornin'?—I was wantin' to see her."

"Certainly, Susy, she *is* in, and I'm sure she'll be very glad to see you, and so will Mrs. Dillon—Mrs. Arthur!" he added, with a smile that put Susy into ecstasies, and drew a fervent blessing from her honest heart.

Arthur turned and rang the bell, desiring the servant who appeared to tell the ladies that Susy Broadigan wanted to see Miss Preston. Maria and myself were sitting together at the time in the front parlor, and pleased we both were.

"Why, then, now, Mrs. Arthur, ma'am," said Susy, rather abruptly, after showing her manners by dropping a curtsy to each, "what have you been doin' to the master, dear young gentleman! that he's come to be so homely and so natural-like all of a sudden?"

We laughed, and Maria asked what she meant, just as though she didn't know, sly one that she was !

"Hut, tut, ma'am—begging your pardon—sure you know well enough. Why, only I've been lookin' at him since he was the height o' my knee, I wouldn't believe the bishop it was him was in it. All the ould foolery that he used to have is gone—gone, I hope, for good."

"What makes you think so, Susy ?" said Maria, still laughing.

"What makes me think so, ma'am ! why, isn't it as plain as the nose on my face ! When I met him there abroad, didn't he speak to me as kind an' as civil as if I was one of his own aquals !—an' didn't he smile at myself, too—an' more betoken, ma'am ! he has sich a sweet smile of his own, that you'd wonder at him for throwin' it away on an ould apple-woman. And didn't he ring the bell with his own hand ! Wow ! wow !" and Susy shook her head with a most sagacious air ; "sure it's myself can see the change in the clappin' of your hands. Tell me this, ma'am !" and Susy sidled up quite close to Maria, until she almost whispered in her ear ; "Tell me this, if I may make bould to ask : doesn't he go regular to his duty now ?—I know the ould madam couldn't get him to go at all."

Maria answered in the affirmative, and then changed the conversation, but Susy would have the last word. "I knew it—I knew it well," she said, with honest exultation, "I'm an ould woman now, ladies, and I never seen sich a change as that brought about in so short a time athout the grace o' God. Nothing in the world but

that one thing could bring Mister Arthur to what he is from what he was."

"But, it's what I'm forgettin' myself altogether, an' making mighty free entirely. But sure ye's all know that poor Susy Broadigan says nothing but what's in her heart an' mind, an' you never take anything she says amiss, God mark ye's all with grace! Well! Miss Elinor dear, I came over this mornin' just to ask you if you ever got any word from Larry and Nancy, from beyant the water. I'm troubled every night dreamin' about them, an' it's what I began to think they might be dead."

"Not unless they died within the last month, Susy, for I had a letter from them a few days ago. They were quite well then."

"Thanks be to God for that same, dear!—are they still in the same place—Montrale—I think it was—or somewhere in the Canadas, anyhow?"

"Yes! they are still in Montreal—they were so fortunate as to be both engaged in the same house just as they were with us!"

"Ah! God help them, poor things! I'm afeard they'll never meet with a home like yours!—poor Nancy and poor Larry! may the Lord assist their honest enday-vors. I was speakin' to Larry's mother, ould Polly, and she tould me she got five pound from them about three months agone. Their luck will be all the better for not forgettin' her. I must call on my way back an' let poor granny know about this letter."

I said she would oblige me by doing so, whereupon

Susy, having asked for all the surviving members of our family, and invoked a blessing on each, turned to Maria and bade her "good-mornin'," together with a certain ejaculatory prayer which brought the warm blood to the young matron's cheek.

"May the Lord bring you safe over your trouble, Mrs. Arthur, dear!" she repeated in a lower voice, on her way to the door. "Sure it's myself knows well the tryin' time that's before you—ochone! hadn't I five o' them myself! God be with you all till I see you again!"

"Susy evidently considers herself a privileged person," said Maria, as Susy's squat little figure disappeared from our view; "if another in her position were to speak as she does they would get turned out of doors for their pains, but for your life you can't put a check on Susy's tongue. It will run on, do as you may, and you cannot take offence, for, after all, there is much good sense in what she says. You must have noticed her remarks as to the change so visible in Arthur."

"I did, and am quite of her way of thinking. There is no such cure for vanity, affectation, and all other such nonsense, as the cultivation of religious sentiments—of course I do not mean the mere outward practices of religion, but the thoughts, the habit of mind. Place that under the influence of religion, and all that is mean, shallow, conventional, will disappear like specks from off the sun's disk."

"Why, you talk like a book, *ma belle* Elinor, and quite strongly, too!" said Maria, with a pleased smile.

"If I do, it is because I feel strongly on this subject. If all young men were made fully sensible of their true relations with regard to God and the world, so that they could bear the insensate ridicule of foolish worldlings without shrinking, we should then see them in their real character—fresh from the hand of God—and there would be no lisping dandies, no foreign airs put on to mar and disfigure, as in Arthur's case it did, a really fine character. Irishmen, were they only true to God, would be Irishmen, properly so called—proud of that title—proud of their honored ancestry."

"I declare, Nell," said Maria, archly, though her own cheek glowed with sympathetic fervor, "I declare, you grow quite eloquent. There spoke the blood of all the old Prestons from the Confederation* down! Upon my word, Aunt Kate was nothing to you in the way of glorifying your ancestors!"

"Don't mistake me now, Maria"—I knew she didn't mistake me—she well knew and fully entered into my feelings on the subject—"I do not speak of my own ancestors in particular—I include the whole of Catholic Ireland—oh! it is a glorious heritage that our fathers have left us!"

"I know it, sweet friend, I know it well; but here comes Mrs. Dillon, senior—it's well she didn't hear you, or she'd be for sending you to Swift's† in a straight

* The great Catholic Confederation of 1641, in which the Lord Gormanstown of that day took an active part. He was one of the Lords of the Pale who remained faithful to the old religion.

† Swift's Hospital is the Lunatic Asylum of Dublin. It was founded by Dean Swift.

jacket, and perhaps me too for listening to a mad-woman. Hush-sh-sh, not a word!—there's a thunder-cloud on her brow, or *I'm* mistaken. Oh! mother," and she almost ran to meet her, "I thought you'd never get in from market. I want you to help me to cut out those shirts!"

"To be sure you do!" said the old lady, gruffly, as she puffed and panted herself into a chair; "you're always a' wantin' me for something or another—I wonder what you'd do if you hadn't me. I think, between the two of you, you might manage to cut the shirts without me: here I am just worn off my feet with the dint of hard work, runnin' to market, runnin' here, an' runnin' there, an' two of you girls sittin' here in state—not doin' a thing. My poor bones pays for all. But sure it's all on account of some people bein' brought up ladies—ladies indeed!—well come up with us all!—some people's the china ware, an' some people's the crockery—that's it! well! well! its a quare world anyhow—for the size of it!"

Having delivered herself of this aphorism, apparently very consoling to herself—it was rather a favorite with her, too—she seemed to grow somewhat softer: "Well! what about them shirts, girls?—it's a pity to keep the two of you idle. Get the linen, Maria, an' I'll show you what to do."

As Maria well knew, this was soothing to her bustling self-importance, and away she posted in tolerably good humor to give directions about the dinner.

Arthur was near spoiling all at dinner. "Mother!"

said he, "we're going to visit Christ's church and St. Patrick's this afternoon with a friend or two from the country whom I have asked to spend the evening. Will you come?"

"Indeed, then, I won't," was the gracious rejoinder; "I never want to set my foot in one o' them churches—where's the use of it?—there's churches enough of our own in the city where we can go an' say a prayer when we have time! Catch *me* goin' to Christ church or St. Patrick's either—more shame for it to have such a name! I wish to God they had called it something else when they took it from us! If they called it Harry the Eighth's church, or Queen Bess' church, or something that way, now, it would be only common decency; but to think of them having the impudence to keep St. Patrick's name on the buildin' when he turned his back on it hundreds o' years ago, an' wouldn't touch it with his stick ever since—St. Patrick's church indeed!—oh! its no wonder *my* head's gray!"

"Never mind them, Margaret!" said the old gentleman—for he was a gentleman, one of nature's gentlemen—in a soothing tone, "never mind. Give us some soup, there's a good soul! before it cools. Is it mock-turtle, or what?"

"Mock-turtle, to-day again!—no, indeed, Stephen, honey! it's no such thing! You had mock-turtle, yesterday, and you may be very thankful to get it once a week. It's just plain rice soup—that's what it is!"

"Let us have it, my dear, whatever it is. Thank you—Elinor, after you! Well, Arthur, my boy, are

you going to take our Kerry friends a sight-seeing ~~this~~ afternoon?"

"I think so, father,—that is, if you cannot well spare time."

The old gentleman could not spare time. He had the world and all of business on hands, but he charged his son to show the visitors everything that was worth seeing.

"Well, you know I can't show them all in one day, father, but we'll do what we can in that way between this and six o'clock."

About three the carriage was at the door, and the two Fitzmaurices, commonly known in their own locality as the Fitzmaurice Brothers, were duly in waiting in the front parlor when Maria and I descended, shawled and bonneted, for the drive. They were no strangers to any of the Dillon family, so their introduction was merely to myself. There was so little to distinguish one brother from the other, and the family likeness was really so strong, that for the life of me I could hardly remember which was which. Several times during the afternoon I had the mortification of being set right, now addressing Mr. Henry as Mr. John, and *vice versa*. After several mischances of this kind, and just when I was falling into despair, I discovered by the merest chance that Mr. John, the head of the firm, spoke with the slightest possible snuffle, while his brother's enunciation was remarkably clear. This discovery set me quite at my ease, and the relief it afforded me gave me such a flow of spirits as I had not had for many a day.

previous. I had often visited the Dublin *lions* before, but really I was quite in the humor of examining them myself that day and exhibiting their "points" to others. So off we went in the Dillon barouche, Maria and I on the back seat, with Fitzmaurice Brothers for our *vis-à-vis*, and Arthur sharing the driver's seat.

First we visited some of the principal Catholic churches, that of the Conception in Marlborough street, St. Andrew's in Westland row, the beautiful Church of St. Francis Xavier in Gardiner street, and one or two others, but these were all too new for the antiquarian tastes of our southern friends ; they were proud to see such churches belonging to *ourselves*, and, to do them justice, said a short prayer in each with becoming reverence, but they wanted to get on to "the old churches and things"—the *things* being, as we afterwards found out, the Four Courts, the Custom House, the Bank of Ireland, and Nelson's Pillar ; none of them belonging, indeed, to the antiquarian period, but great sights, for all that, for "country cousins."

I was really in a facetious mood just then, for there was something remarkably quizzical about this worthy pair of Siamese twins—by-the-by, they were rather of the fattest, too—quite in condition were the two Brothers Fitzmaurice. But this artificial frame of mind soon gave way before the awful grandeur of the old cathedral piles. There is something inexpressibly solemn and touching in the interior of such grand old temples—temples where our fathers worshipped, albeit that they have since "fallen from their high estate," and have now

neither altar nor sacrifice. There is choral service in Christ Church every afternoon at three o'clock, on which occasion it is usually crowded with fashionables, but by the time we reached there the service was over, the audience gone, and the old minster left to its ghostly stillness, broken only by our cautious footsteps, and our whispered comments on what we saw. As we wandered through the sounding aisles, a tender melancholy stole over me as memory brought back the last visit I had paid to Christ Church, when my father and mother and poor Aunt Kate were all of the party. Then they were full of life and spirits, and likely to live for many and many a year ; now they were all dead—dead and cold as the marble effigy of the renowned Strongbow, where it lay on its monumental slab before us, with shield on arm and hands clasped as if in prayer. (It had need to pray, too, for it is to be feared that its original, like many other great men, did not pray much while living !) Still I did my best to shake off these saddening thoughts, and affected a gayety I no longer felt. After a while, however, my own individual concerns began to dwindle into nothing, and finally faded from my mind, in presence of the tombs of the mighty dead. When I stood before the monumental figure of "*The first and principal invader of Ireland,*" as the legend on his tomb describes him, I said to myself, "What now remains of this great Captain—the terror of a whole nation ? A handful of dust, even that undistinguishable from its mother earth ! So much for what men call glory !" Still further on, we paused before the tomb of Thomas

Prior, and again the inward voice whispered: "Here lies a man who holds a high place among the English classics; his fame remains, but himself—where is he? what is there now of his mortal body? where is his immortal soul—the spirit which created those undying verses?" On and on we went through "the sweeping aisles," passing on our way the tombs of lords temporal and spiritual, with eminent citizens of every age. What were all these now but phantom-names, high-sounding indeed, and much be-praised on their respective stones by the chisels of men who, less fortunate than those they celebrated, had themselves sunk into nameless graves! What had become of the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows which alternately held these sleepers in thrall?—all gone—gone—leaving no record of their passage! Then how could I, poor lowly mortal, undistinguished from the common herd, how could I busy myself in such a scene, in such a presence—with little sorrowful reminiscences which affected only myself? "What will your troubles be in fifty years or so?" I asked myself; "who will then know anything about them or you?—for shame!—cheer up, girl! and do what you can to cheer others too!" In pursuance of this sage self-counsel I resolutely turned the brightest side out, and made myself very busy in the capacity of *cicerone* to the great comfort and instruction of the Brothers Fitzmaurice. Great was the wonder expressed on their faces as I told them of the old Danish king of Dublin, Sitric son of Auley, who, in conjunction with the archbishop of that day, also a Dane, founded this church about the middle

of the twelfth century ; and still more surprised were they when I pointed out to them the different portions of the building, distinctive in their character, erected at widely-different periods. I believe they regarded myself with as much admiration as they did the lofty arches and graceful pillars, and archiepiscopal grandeur of the old cathedral :

“ And still they gazed, and still their wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all *I* knew.”

So much talking was very unusual with me, but somehow it seemed to devolve on me : Arthur had never given much attention to the history of his country, or the local history of his native city, and Maria, though tolerably well informed on most subjects, had little or no taste for archæological or antiquarian lore. So there were the Brothers Fitzmaurice to be enlightened—wanting to know all about every thing ; and there were national monuments which I highly prized, crying out to me in their own mute eloquence to do them justice, so talk I must and did.

Leaving Christ Church, we sent the carriage on before, and proceeded on foot through the ancient street, which bears the name of our national patroness, the great St. Bride, to the venerable Church of St. Patrick, said to be founded by the Saint himself. Like some brilliant gem gleaming out through the dusty rubbish of an “old curiosity-shop,” stands the beautiful old Cathedral, closely surrounded by, and as it were choked up among buildings of a mean and common description, many of them

bearing the marks of very respectable antiquity, but with little else to recommend them. But St. Patrick's itself, both without and within, is a rare specimen of the graceful Gothic, in perhaps its purest period, the twelfth or thirteenth century. There are few buildings in Ireland, or perhaps any other country, to exceed St. Patrick's, whether in artistic excellence, or historic interest. Many a Saint officiated at its altars—when altars it had—and in the van of the shadowy host rising before us are the venerable figures of St. Patrick, and St. Lawrence O'Toole, great patriarchs of our race. Passing on down to modern times we perceive "the witty Dean," whose name is honorably identified with that of St. Patrick's—the immortal Swift, whose mortal remains rest within the walls of the church where he so often officiated. Near him sleeps Hester Johnson, known all the world over as the **STELLA** who was his inspiration. Their monuments are plain marble tablets placed against two adjoining pillars in the nave. Here, too, lies the body of Duke Schomberg, mouldered into dust, and yonder slab of black marble set in the wall commemorates the notable fact.

It was a breezy day in early summer, a day of cloud and sunshine, and the sunbeams shooting through the grand old windows, glanced, and gleamed, and danced like elfin spirits through the deserted aisles and over the ancient tombs. The wind, too, came rushing in at intervals, gently uplifting the gauze veil from off my bonnet, giving a sportive shake to Maria's long ringlets, and then, by way of *finale*, sweeping along the arched

roof, making such a rustling up there among the heavy folds of the ancient banners,* that the Brothers Fitzmaurice simultaneously started more than once, and looked up alarmed, probably believing that some of the shadows of the place were suddenly starting into life.

Having at last seen all that was to be seen, we took our leave of the old Cathedral, Maria and I, as we whispered to each other in the aisles, both impressed with the sad fate which had given these treasures of Catholic art into the hands of strangers,—Arthur thinking that, after all, the dark ages weren't so very dark as people take the liberty of calling them, and the Brothers Fitzmaurice as full of simple wonder as men could be. The burthen of their thoughts may be inferred from what Arthur overheard Mr. Henry say to Mr. John, while the rest of us were considering where we should go next: "I say, John, wouldn't she be better than a book of winter nights by the fireside? why, if we had her, it would be just the same as a peep-show—only hearing, instead of seeing." To which John, it appears, gave a cordial assent. Good, simple souls, those Tralee merchants! but, I fancy, rather further behind the age than Tralee merchants are now. By the time we had seen all the usual sights, Maria and myself were about tired, though we had on the whole a pleasant afternoon of it.

* "The banners of the Knights of St. Patrick hang at a considerable elevation over the arches of the nave, and would have a very pleasing effect but for the melancholy appearance of decay which the whole of this portion of the venerable edifice presents."—*Dublin*, by W. F. WAKEMAN.

There was a freshness of originality about the worthy Kerry men that was quite charming ; and then to hear Arthur, how glowingly he descended on the eloquence of Curran, and Flood, and Grattan, while doing the honors of the ancient Parliament House, now alas ! known as the Bank of Ireland—*sic transit gloria mundi !* Maria and I smiled at each other as we listened to his explanations, as memory brought back the time—only a few years back—when he would have sneered, or affected to sneer, at the name and fame of even those great luminaries of the political hemisphere of Ireland. Our country friends were evidently more at home on this subject. They had read of the great orators of their country, and were honestly proud of their fame. They had been subscribers to the *Nation* from its very commencement, and were rather inclined to take sides with the Young Ireland party—not that they were prepared to give up the moral force doctrine, for they were still ardent admirers of O'Connell and spoke of him as the Liberator, although that term was now tacitly dropped—the star of the great leader being well-nigh set. So the Brothers Fitzmaurice stood, as it were, midway between the Old and Young Irelanders, with a hand extended lovingly to each.

“ Pray, Mr. Dillon,” said the elder brother, as we stepped out into the grand portico of the Bank of Ireland, fronting on Westmoreland street, “ pray, Mr. Dillon ! which of these six is the pillar against which Curran was found leaning at the moment when the unfortunate Act of Union was being passed within ? ”

Arthur looked surprised, and not a little embarrassed.

He had never heard of this incident, and yet did not like to say so.

"I really can't tell," he said; "I believe tradition has not pointed out which particular pillar it was."

"Well! the incident has always struck me as most affecting—you know it, *of course*, Miss Preston?" Miss Preston did not, unluckily.

"Well! it seems that on that fatal day of the year 1800, which sealed the political doom—and, I might add, annihilated the nationality of Ireland—unless, indeed, the glorious revival of our era may restore it to life, which is not at all improbable—as I was saying, ladies, on that fatal day somebody, whose name I forget—my memory is none of the best at times, found the great little counsellor leaning against one of these pillars—I'm really sorry not to know which of them it was—with a countenance so woe-begone, and, in fact, so dull and stupid, that he was really alarmed, and, taking him by the arm, asked what was the matter. Whereupon poor Curran told him, but not till he had repeated the question more than once, that there was quite enough the matter, for that the national existence of Ireland was being sold away in-doors, 'and,' said poor Curran, 'I couldn't stand it—I couldn't wait to see that treasonable Act passed!' I don't pretend to say it in his own words, but that's the substance of it. Ah! John Philpot Curran!" apostrophized the worthy Kerry man, as he wiped away a tear that made me forgive all his tedious circumlocution, "John Philpot Curran! it's low your grave is this day in Prospect Cemetery but high is your place in the

heart of Ireland, for it's you had the great tongue and the great head, and it's you was the patriot all out!"

"Is it Curran, your honor!" interrupted an old-fashioned little urchin, whose garments were in a sad state of dilapidation, especially about the knees and elbows; "is it Curran, your honor! ah! then, sure enough he was the broth of a boy, and if you want to know which pillar it was, sir, sure I'm the boy that knows it as well as any other in Dublin City. There it is, your honor! pointing, or rather laying his finger on the one just before him; "that's it, sir! that's the one Curran leaned agin' whin he tuk that weakness—pity the friend you were talkin' of, sir, hadn't a drop of *Kinahan's malt* in his pocket—it 'id bring him round in no time. You wouldt have e'er a sixpence or a shillin' about you, sir? —my mother's very bad with the windy colic, sir, an' there's six of us in it, an' we haven't a rap to bless ourselves with—"

"Poor boy! poor boy!" broke simultaneously from the wonder-parted lips of Fitzmaurice Brothers, as they each dropped a shilling in the outstretched palm. For us, we could hardly keep from laughing, for the youngster, as we passed him descending the steps, evidently knowing us citizens from our country friends, said, with a leer of most mature cunning: "I wonder, old boys! does your mother know you're out?"

"I say, Ned!" cried another juvenile loiterer from a lower step, "you took them to the fair nicely—didn't you?—what did *you* know about the pillar?"

"Why not much, to be sure," returned Ned, with dig .

nified candor, "but none of them knew any more than I did, an' why wouldn't I make an honest penny out of the Kerry men. It's all for my poor mother, you know, that's so bad with the windy colic!" and then both raised such a laugh that Fitzmaurice Brothers turned their heads, whereupon the waggish young shark who had been preying upon their simple kindness, placed his finger on his nose, and with his two hands made that rapid gesture meant to express plainer than words could the flattering sentiment : " You're sold, aren't you ? "

" Well ! well ! " said Mr. Henry, while Mr. John shook his head in accordance with his brother's *dictum* : " well ! well ! I often heard of the Dublin jakeens, but that chap beats all ! He looks as if he was his own grandfather ! "

Arthur assured them for their comfort, that they had seen nothing of the jakeens yet ; whereupon they held up their hands in simple wonder.

This little incident gave us a good laugh at the expense of our worthy friends, they themselves laughing as heartily as any of us, and our whole party were in the best of humor when the carriage stopped at Mr. Dillon's door, in Adelaide Place, Upper Baggot street.

The old lady met us at the door in full feather, viz., a copper-colored satin dress, the richest of old-fashioned lace, in the shape of a collar which almost covered her ample shoulders, fastened with a brooch which might have formed part of the regalia of some native prince in the old, old times. The good lady's head-dress was rather of the fly-away character, and with its broad

streamers of handsome gauze ribbon, looked as though it might take wing any moment. The fine, fresh-colored and somewhat chubby face within it was, at the moment, in a state of commotion, and her salutation was, I am sorry to say, more characteristic than polite :

"What in the world kept you so long?—why you might have been ten times round the city since!—for goodness sake, girls! *do* go up and take off your things,—don't wait to dress any more, for the people are tired waiting! you'll do well enough as you are! Arthur, will you just take the two Mr. Fitzmaurices up to the drawing-room? Hurry now, for I'm ashamed of my life!"

We were none of us over and above pleased to be thus coerced into using dispatch, and we of the feminine gender grumbled a little about the awkwardness of appearing "just as we were," but when we once got the length of the drawing-room, our anticipated embarrassment quickly vanished, for the party assembled, consisting of six or eight, were all old friends, and none but "the old familiar faces" met our view. So there was no credit in "being jolly, under the circumstances," as honest Mark Tapley would say, and by the time we had shaken hands with the company all round, everybody was talking to everybody, and as nobody was in full dress, we were quite satisfied with our own, for dress is, after all, but a secondary consideration among really well-bred people, and those who can appreciate the charm of *good* society, are precisely those who will anywhere trouble themselves least about the outward adorn-

ment of "the mortal coil" which encases the bright, cheerful, happy spirit. We had a delightful evening of it—tea and coffee handed round by the gentlemen, one or two of whom had the special privilege of assisting Mrs. Dillon, who presided at the table, placed in the centre of the room. It was an old joke, a standing joke, that of "keeping the ladies in hot water," but when brought out then with much humor by young Barrett, the self-appointed *aid-de-camp*, as he said, of Mrs. Dillon, it was as well received as though heard then and there for the first time. O'Shaughnessy was there in a "bran new suit" of his favorite snuff-color, and with him my brother George, then a very handsome young man, but looking some five years older, poor fellow! than he really was. It was painful to me to note the change which had come upon him. The fine flow of spirits for which he had once been remarkable, had latterly given place to a subdued and quiet demeanor that was all but melancholy, and the boyish gaiety which had been wont to cheer us all, had fled and left scarce a trace behind. And how inexpressibly dear he was to my lonely heart, that kind, fond brother of whom any sister might be proud. If my poor aunt had lived to see him then with the precious dignity of sorrow ennobling his early manhood, and the light of a cultivated intellect beaming from his dark eye, she would have claimed him proudly as a Preston, though I question whether he did not take his finest traits, both mental and physical, from the maternal line. However that might be, it is pretty certain that George Preston was regarded with no small degree

of admiration by more than one Dublin *belle*, whose parents, I dare say, would have cut them off with a shilling had they dared to acknowledge a *penchant* for the young law-student, the *protégé* of old Shaugh.

During the evening I was honored (dare I say bored ?) with the particular attention of Fitzmaurice Brothers, especially the junior partner, who was really quite and most insufferably soft. My archæological attainments had evidently made a very deep impression on the susceptible heart of Mr. Joh., and the chord touched therein awoke a full diapason from the kindred organ of Mr. Henry. Once when I made a dart into the adjoining room in order to escape their most unwelcome assiduities, I found Arthur entertaining O'Shaughnessy with the account of that day's adventures, if adventures they might be called, due prominence being given to the part I had played.

"But here she comes," said Arthur, "looking as do-mure as though she had not hooked a single fish to-day, when she knows right well she has two great perch or breames—what are they, Elinor?—dangling at her finger-ends." I was just preparing a suitable repartee, when John Fitzmaurice spoke from behind.

"Mr. O'Shaughnessy, we want you out here to make up a rubber—you play whist, don't you?"

"Don't I?—I rather think so, Mr. Fitzmaurice. But I say, I've been having an eye to business here. There's a crim. con. brewing, I fancy, and of course I'm in for it." This was said I afterwards found by way of "diversion" in my favor, the worthy man fearing that the

other might have overheard some of the previous *bardinage*. Arthur and I looked, as we felt, really astonished, and poor innocent Fitzmaurice blushed like a peony, for no other earthly reason but the steadfast gaze of the immoveable old lawyer, fixed pointedly on him.

"Why what *do* you mean?" said Arthur. "That requires explanation, my good sir—*crim. con.* is rather a serious matter."

"It is, eh?—and you want explanation—just as if you hadn't told me there a minute ago that one of the Brothers Fitzmaurice—the youngest I think it was—had been rather attentive to your wife. Come now, Arthur!—be a man and speak out!"

Arthur was now really embarrassed. The thing was so very absurd—the remark so very unlooked for—that *I believe* a pistol discharged at his ear would not have startled him more. Still he thought it necessary to say something, as the Kerryman turned his eyes full upon him with no very agreeable expression either.

"I—I—really, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, I never dreamed—upon my honor, this is too bad—too ridiculous—"

"Allow *me* to tell you, Mr. Dillon!" said Fitzmaurice very slowly and with marked emphasis, "that I will not permit any man to introduce my name in such an affair. If you entertained such an idea of—the *youngest Fitzmaurice*" with an ironical bow—"why admit him to your house this evening? A hint would have been quite sufficient, for we are not so dull of comprehension down in Kerry as you Dubliners may suppose."

He spoke with such energy and in so vehement a tone

that it was quite clear how much he was offended. Arthur looked reproachfully at his friend who burst into a hearty laugh, such a laugh as no one could give but himself.

"Well now, really, Mr. Fitzmaurice," said he, "I give you credit for much genuine humor. If you hadn't that you could never enter into the spirit of my joke so well. Give me your hand, man!—if I haven't the prospect of making out a case by your instrumentality, I have made a very pleasant acquaintance. You must dine with me to-morrow."

"Excuse me, sir!" replied Fitzmaurice very stiffly, "if the whole was, as I begin to perceive, a fabrication of your fruitful brain, it is still very offensive to me. I may be a plain, unpolished countryman—if you will—but I always make it a rule never to make a jest of anything that would be offensive to God. If this gentleman's wife were *not* his wife, you might quiz me about her till midnight and I wouldn't take the least offence, but being his wife, or any other man's wife, I will not be taxed with paying her particular attention. I have neither heart nor eye in her, Mr. Arthur, I do assure you. Marriage is a sacred institution, my worthy sir, and everything sacred must be respected. What think you, Miss Preston?" he asked very suddenly, so suddenly indeed that I started and blushed, the more so as I had been just thinking, "after all, we cannot but respect you—simple as you seem to be."

"Who—I—Mr. Fitzmaurice?" I hesitated, and conscious of that, blushed still deeper. "I really don't

know, but—but I should think you are quite right. But surely you take the matter in too serious a light—if you knew Mr. O'Shaughnessy as well as we do, you wouldn't mind any thing he says."

" Provided he jest on proper subjects——"

" Poh, poh! man, you're forgetting what you came for," said O'Shaughnessy, and rising he laid hold of his arm, " you're what I call the crow's messenger, my fine fellow. Where's this whist-table?—I suppose you're all tired waiting. This lad" looking slyly up at his companion's rather extensive whiskers, wherein there was a considerable sprinkling of grey, "this lad, I say, saw something within there that attracted his attention—a sort of a rattlesnake, or basilisk, or some other specimen of natural history—ahem!—Ellinor, my dear, are you going to join us young people?"

" Do, pray, excuse me, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, I've got to look after that rattlesnake you talk of. It is not safe to leave it at large." And away I went with the old gentleman's merry laugh ringing in my ear.

Whether it was the visit of the Fitzmaurices that put it into Maria's head, or what, I cannot say, but in a few days after their departure, she asked Arthur what would he think of a trip to Killarney. Whatever she pleased, Arthur said—if she liked it, so would he.

" Oh! you dear, obliging creature!—what a pattern husband you are, to be sure—well, then, hey for Killarney!—that's the word!—of course, Ellinor, you'll come!"

" Of course I will not. I'm going to spend a few weeks at Cabra, and that will be a good opportunity."

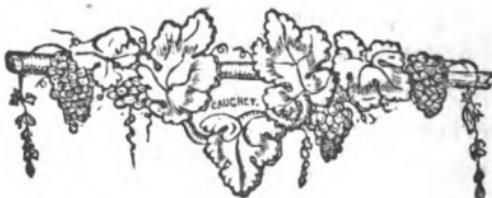
"Very well, *ma chère amie!*—you'll deprive me of the trip, that's all, for I sha'n't go a step without you. But I know very well what's in the wind, my lady!—you're afraid to venture into the kingdom of Kerry for fear of being carried off bodily to Tralee!"

"Nonsense, Maria!—how you do run on!—but, seriously, if you wish me to go—and, after all, I may be useful to you—why, I'm quite willing to go."

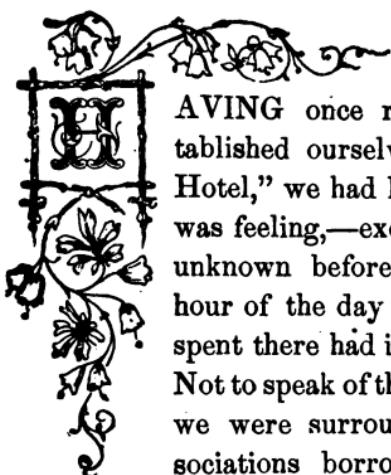
"That's my own good girl. Now let us go and tell Mamma Dillon—come along, both of you, it will take us all to come round her. If we can manage it, she must come too, for it will do her a world of good. If she goes, we can easily persuade father."

It was no easy matter to reconcile the old lady to the projected tour—the expense seemed enormous to her economical eyes; and as to herself, why it would have been just as easy to persuade the Sugar-Loaf mountain to pay a neighborly visit to the Scalp as to induce her to shut up No. 3 Adelaide Place. "She wasn't so mad yet as all that came too," she told us, very impressively; "if some people *were* a little flighty or so, she thanked God *she* never was that, the youngest day ever she was. If Stephen liked, *he* might go," she condescended to say, knowing all the time that Stephen would *not* go unless she went. We next tried our joint eloquence on him, but it was no use—"he couldn't think of going without Margaret; and, after all, it wouldn't be safe, perhaps, for all to leave home. The business and the house were worth attending to." What effect this might have had on Arthur there is no saying, but Maria gave him

no time to think. It was nothing but bustle, bustle from morning till night, for the next forty-eight hours; and at the end of that time off we three started for Killarney, in company with Mr. O'Shaugnessy—how my heart ached to leave poor George behind, and he looked so longingly after us, too, when we started from the Railroad Depot. Poor fellow! how often did the tears start to my eyes that day when I thought of him going back slowly, slowly and alone, to resume his daily labor in that low first-floor office, where he sat all the midday hours through, behind his desk, thinking of days gone forever, when he, too, would have been on the road, full of excitement and joyous anticipation! I wonder whether he or I felt saddest or loneliest that day, although he was nearly alone, pent up all day, at his cheerless task, and I hurrying on from one new scene to another in company with kind and hearty companions.



CHAPTER V.

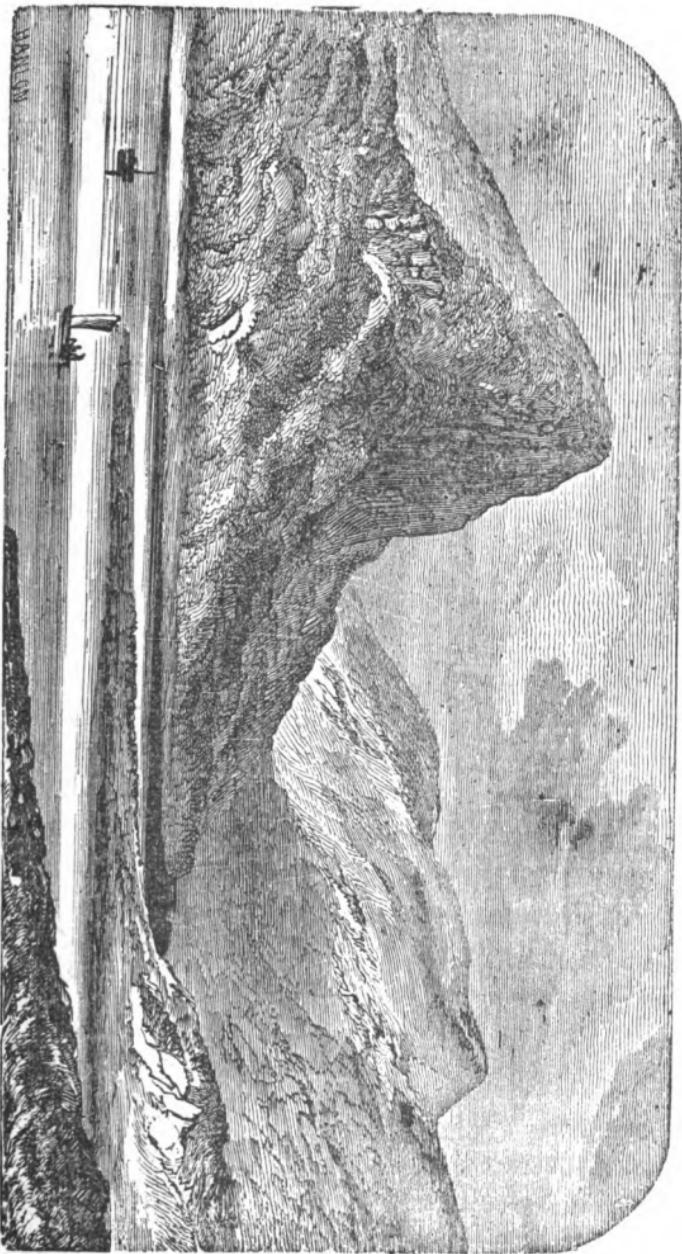


AVING once reached Killarney, and established ourselves in the fair-famed "Lake Hotel," we had little time for thought. All was feeling,—exquisite, fresh, and of a kind unknown before. Every day and every hour of the day during the week that we spent there had its own round of enjoyment. Not to speak of the natural wonders by which we were surrounded, and the thrilling associations borrowed from the old "Lake lore," there were both pleasure and amusement to be met in the crowded parlors and drawing-rooms of the hotel, where all sorts of characters from all sorts of places were to be seen. It was real enjoyment to secure seats near one of the windows in the drawing-room, towards evening, when the different parties began to drop in from their protracted rambles, to hear them, while waiting for the tea-bell, comparing notes, and retailing their several experiences for the public entertainment:—ourselves all the time looking out on the fairy scene,—Castle Lough Bay, with the remains of the Mac

Carthys' ancient castle ; Ross Island, with its historic ruin, once a fortress of great strength, and memorable from its heroic resistance to the canting cut-throats of Old Noll ; the fairy Island of Innisfallen, with its once splendid Abbey, now roofless all and desolate ; to the left, the gigantic Torc rearing his huge form to the skies ; further on in the same direction the Eagle's Nest ; and before us, in the distance, the loveliest of Killarney mountains, the pastoral Glena with its hue of summer verdure—to see all this through the gathering mists of evening, listening all the while with a sort of dreamy consciousness to the running commentary going on around. A fair-haired girl—a Cork beauty—was singing at a distant piano to some half dozen admiring swains one of Moore's delightful reminiscences of Killarney :

“ ‘Twas one of those dreams that by music are brought,
Like a bright summer haze o'er the poet's warm thought—
When, lost in the future, his soul wanders on,
And all of this life but its sweetness is gone.”

The voice that sung these musical words was certainly neither a Jenny Lind's nor a Catherine Hayes', but it was soft and tremulous ; the latter, probably, on account of some “listening ear” whose heart was wont to respond to those tones. It was, in short, a voice well fitted for a simple lay : and then the hazy, tender twilight, and the thousand romantic associations of the place, all conspired to give a charm to the unpretending minstrelsy and before the song was half through, all other



EAGLES' NEST, KILLARNY.—(See page 114.)

sounds were hushed throughout the spacious room, and we all listened as it were entranced. When the last sweet cadence died away, the singer, ashamed of the attention she had excited, glided quickly from the room : but from that hour I felt a desire to make her acquaintance, for I felt that she had a soul, and something told me that it was a kindred soul, too. My pleasant reverie was broken by the sound of a quick, rough voice almost at my ear, singing, or rather droning out, as if in derision, those elegant lines :

“What a beauty I did grow—what a beauty I did grow,”
ending somewhat in this wise :

“My mammy fed me with a quill for fear to spoil my mouth.”

It was the first time we had ever heard “a stave,” as he called it, from Shaugh’s mouth, and Balaam, accordingly, was not more astonished when his assine supporter opened her mouth and spoke. Every eye was instantly turned on the queer old customer, who sat lilting his charming ditty with such cool composure. At first there was a general inclination to resent the evident attempt to burlesque the song just ended, but one glance at the humorous old fogy was quite sufficient to do away with any such feeling, and the abruptness with which the discordant sounds commenced, together with the odd selection made, tickled the audience so that they—I should say *we*—burst into a hearty laugh. Shaugh then stopped all of a sudden; and looked around with affected anger :

“Well, really, for tourists, you’re about the most ill-

mannered set of people I ever came across : here you were, almost crying a minute ago at the melody of sweet sounds kept up through some half dozen verses, but as soon as I began to tune my pipes, you hadn't the common decency to let me sing more than one verse—hardly that same. All because my honorable and learned—hump! I mean my *fair* friend, is a very charming little noun feminine, whilst I'm nothing better than a rough old verb active—to sing—to grunt—to snarl."

We were summoned to tea at the moment, but I could see by the looks and signs interchanged among the company that the old Dublin lawyer was set down as a little touched in the attic story.

Next day we made the acquaintance of Miss McCarthy, the young vocalist of the previous evening, and I found her just what I expected, if not something more. She was a gentle, loveable creature, sportive as a fawn, yet mild in manner and pure in heart—a genuine Irish girl of the very best stamp. Her talents, naturally good, had been carefully and well cultivated, and her reasoning powers were far beyond those of most girls I had met ; yet there was so little stiffness or formality about her that you constantly forgot the higher qualities of her mind in the sprightly ease of her manners. Dear Ellen McCarthy ! how I love, even now, to recall the charms of your fair, girlish face, your slight, graceful form, and your conversation, so full of mind, so brilliant, and yet so artless. She was pious, too, really, sincerely, but unostentatiously pious. Her parents, like my own, were dead, yet you could hardly call her an orphan, for

she was blessed with the protection of a grandfather, the kindest and most indulgent, yet most prudent of Mentors. He was a man of considerable fortune, and had mixed all his life in the best society of his native city, and that city the Irish Athens. They were a charming pair, as memory sees them now,—the tall, dignified old gentleman, looking as though the blood of the entire “Clan Mac Caura” had descended into his veins, and was there duly enshrined as in a costly casket;

“His hair is white with winter-snow
No earthly sun away may carry,”

and the fire of mind and spirit is still alive in his dark, southern features. He is like some aged oak, strong and proud even in decay, while the fair Hebe leaning on his arm, looks like some graceful tendril clinging to its venerable trunk. Such were Denis John Mac Carthy and his pretty granddaughter when they crossed my path at Killarney. Our intercourse was then but brief—a few days only—but in that short time we knew each other as well as though we had been years and years together. Although no two men could be more unlike in most respects than the lordly Mac Carthy and the quick, busy, bustling attorney, yet somehow they were quite attached to each other, I suppose because extremes are said to meet; and in all our excursions through the Lake region you would generally find the little old-fashioned man of parchment somewhere in the immediate vicinity of the calm, self-possessed, aristocratic-looking Southerner peering up into his face, and perhaps standing on

tip-toe as he did so, while endeavoring to impress him with some peculiar view of some favorite subject. And it was a picture too, in its way,—the contrast between those two men, each representing his own class.

As for us juniors of the party, we all four kept pretty much together, though it often happened that Ellen and myself contrived to get separated from the rest of the party ; and it was then that the rich, poetic fancy, and the cultivated taste of my young friend showed to most perfection. In ordinary cases she was rather abashed by the presence of strangers, and seldom spoke much ; but when alone with me, or with only her grandfather besides, she could talk and I could listen for ever. What glorious reminiscences of former days fell from the lips of both parent and child, as we strolled in the sunmer moonlight among the wondrous scenes where the Mac Carthys ruled as princes, and fought as heroes in the old, old time ! The very islet or promontory (for it is now connected with the mainland by a little artificial causeway) on which our hotel was situate, bore on its bald crown a mouldering fortalice of the Mac Carthys, which had originally given its name to the adjoining or surrounding bay, and the whole was famous throughout the Ireland of that day as *Castle Lough of the Mac Carthys*. Then there was Mucruss, the *Irrelagh* of former days, the great Abbey of the Mac Carthys, and still, even in its ruined state, one of the greatest attractions of Killarney. But alas !

“ The Mac Caura no more comes with gift in his hand,
For the sons of the Saxon are lords of his land,”

and so Ellen whispered as at early morn we stood together beneath the branches of that weird yew, the growth of centuries, which shades the mouldering pillars of the cloisters, and makes noonday dim as twilight hour. "Sad, is it not?" said the fair descendant of the local princes, "to see such fabrics as this of Mucruss hurrying to decay, in silence and neglect, and the chiefs who built them for the honor of God and the good of religion, driven as they have been from hearth and home, wandering landless and friendless men over the broad earth, while strangers,—upstart strangers,—revel in their ancient halls—that is, if they be not *too* time-worn for them—and lord it over their broad domains! Ah! Elinor! it was a strange doom that fell on the native aristocracy of Ireland,—driven out to make place for Cromwellian and Williamite troopers—ours, for instance—the eldest branch of the great Milesian tree! But hush—here they come!—don't you think Mrs. Dillon looks fatigued?"

This was the way in which Ellen usually turned the conversation when we chanced to have our *tête-à-tête* interrupted.

That same evening we sailed over by moonlight to Ross Island, examined at our leisure the ruins of its stately fortress—the stateliest and strongest of southern castles—the last great stronghold of the Confederate Catholic nobles. By the time we had made the circuit of the fortress, and given a sigh to the truth of the old classical proverb—*Sic transit gloria mundi*—we were well prepared to do justice to a cold supper, slyly smuggled

in our boat by the joint contrivance of Arthur and Mr. O'Shaughnessy, the best and most provident of travelling companions. What moonlight that was, to be sure, and what a scene was that over which it threw its silver beams—Killarney's blue water—the placid water of the Lower Lake, dotted with its fairy islands! Killarney's dark, many-colored, tufted woods, and its world-famous mountains standing like giant-sentinels around,—with three ruined abbeys in sight, and the ancient keeps of the Mac Carthys and O'Donoghoes,—the noblest of them all overshadowing our heads, its ivy rustling in the soft night-wind as if in concert with the ripple of the waves at our feet. Surely a fairer scene was never witnessed on this earth, full of beauty as it is, and the heavens above were covering meet for such a scene.

“Off in the West where the lake's blue breast
Reposed like an angel of light at rest,
And the rich rays there seemed spirits of air
That wanton'd about in their silver hair.”

Ah! it was a scene never to be forgotten—'twas, indeed, “too lovely for earth”—too lovely, at least, to be long enjoyed by us poor pilgrims of an hour.

The soothing influence of the scene was irresistible. Even Maria, usually so gay and light-hearted, was, for the time, quite subdued and almost pensive, and Mr. O'Shaughnessy confessed afterwards that he never felt so queer in all his life (*repose* being something altogether foreign to his disposition) as he did that night on **Ross Island**.

For my part, I was, as it were, in a delicious trance, wherein the past and present were softly, mellowly blended. All was peace within and without. I could have sat there for hours, listening to the wind sighing amongst the surrounding foliage, like the spirits of the departed, and the soft murmuring sound of the waters as they playfully kissed the strand. Half unconsciously I gave utterance to one of my thoughts :

“ What exquisite taste they must have had who chose such sites for the homes of religion! On the banks of these charming Lakes we have no less than three abbeys —ruined now, to be sure, but grand and beautiful even in decay.”

“ Yes,” replied Mr. McCarthy, who happened to be seated near me—“ Yes, my dear young lady, I rather think the sites *were* well chosen, on principles of the truest, most refined taste—considering that the nobles who gave them were ‘ mere Irish,’ and the monks to whom they were given were some of the ‘ ignorant drones’ of ‘ the dark ages.’ I should like to see a fraternity of our modern *literati*, now, making up a library such as ‘ those monks of old’ were wont to have, by the labor—the hard, toilsome labor of their own hands, when every single copy of a book had to be copied word for word with the pen! I wonder how certain of our dandified nineteenth-century men, who love to talk and write of ‘ the good-for-nothing lazy monks of the middle ages,’ would look at a ponderous folio of some of the fathers, if it were given them to write out in clear, legible characters from beginning to end with their own

hands—not to speak of those wonderful illuminated characters and devices wherewith the laborious monks of the olden time delighted to ornament their pages! Oh! *wouldn't* our fine gentlemen authors make wry faces at the very thoughts of such an undertaking! I suspect it would make every hair of their ‘imperials’ or *moustaches* stand on end.” This was rather a long speech for the old gentleman, and he drew a long breath when it was ended, and quaffed a long draught of Guinness’s XX, as it were to refresh himself after so unusual an effort.

“I wonder had they as good wine as that in those old days you speak of—shouldn’t think they had, eh?” and Shaugh, as he spoke, held up his glass between his right eye and the moon to catch the ruddy sparkle of the fine old Burgundy, which his own golden key had drawn forth from the most secret recesses of the Lake Hotel. “I drink to your good health, Mr. McCarthy: by and by I’ll give you, to be drunk in solemn silence—faith! its all solemn silence here!—*the memory of your venerable ancestors*,—some of whom,” he added, in a lower tone, looking over his shoulder as he spoke, “some of whom may be within hearing. It wasn’t safe meddling with them, I’m told, when they were in the flesh, and I wouldn’t take it upon me to slight them now that they’re dead, especially when we’ve the honor, ahem!—of supping—maybe trespassing—on their grounds. Ladies!—a glass of wine!—here’s some Madeira that the land-lord passes his word for, so it must be good, eh? ha! ha! ha!”

Mr. McCarthy listened to this characteristic flow of

talk with a grave smile, bent his stately head slightly at the mention of his own name,—lower by a good deal at the allusion to his progenitors ; and when the lawyer had finished and set down his glass, he condescended to say with a kind smile :

“ Allow me to correct a slight mistake under which you appear to labor, my good friend ! while acknowledging as I do your very kind and polite attention—Ross Island belonged *not* to the Mac Carthys, but to their tributaries, the O’Donoghues.”

“ Oh ! well, it’s all the same ; they were all chips of the same block, you know, and followed the same business—it’s all one ! ”

“ What do you mean, sir ? ”

“ Why, then, what *would* I mean, Mr. Denis McCarthy, only everything that’s civil and respectful ? I know what the Mac Carthys were as well as any man living—high and mighty chiefs, every mother’s son of them ; but, upon my honor ! there were some very bad Irishmen amongst them for all that. Pooh ! pooh ! man, don’t knit your brows that way ! sure you know all about Donough—Donough the Red—that was one of the first to kneel and swear allegiance to Henry Plantagenet : but what is that to you or me ? —he was a great prince in his day—a powerful prince—but *he*’s dead, and Plantagenet’s dead, many hundred years ago, so what are their doings to us now ? Take another glass of wine, and we’ll drink, as I said, to the dead Mac Carthys—I mean to their memory. Now, sir—fill, if you please—I’m waiting.”

There was no possibility of keeping anger against a man like this, and happily the old gentleman had too much good sense to take up so silly a quarrel, so the toast was drank in solemn silence, as Shaugh said, and very soon after we quietly left the island to its solitude and silence, and returned (nothing loath, it must be confessed) to the cheerful drawing-room in the hotel, where all was light, and life, and gayety—strange contrast to the scene we had just left.

On the following day we paid a visit to “Innisfallen’s lovely isle,” gave our tribute of admiration to the remains of its noble abbey—spoke of the literary labors of its former occupants, their noble contribution to the chronicles of the nation,* and the treasures of ancient lore which for ages enriched the three abbeys of Killarney, giving a name to the lakes themselves,† and shedding a halo of supernatural glory even now over the natural beauties of that romantic region. Whilst we were admiring the effect of the luxuriant foliage which, as it were, drapes the ruins, and gives them a character of such peculiar grace, Maria slyly asked Arthur whether he had seen anything on his continental travels to exceed that. The poor fellow blushed deeply. He was already heartily ashamed of his former folly, and any allusion to it was by no means agreeable. For my part, I was sorry Maria put the question, but for herself its visible

* The well-known *Annals of Innisfallen*, one of the most authentic fragments of Irish history.

† Loch-Lein, or the Lake of Learning, by which our fathers knew Killarney.

effect only made her laugh. With all her other good qualities, she was certainly, and at all times, deficient in that delicate tact which saves the feelings of others. As for Arthur, he had only to make the best of it. Shaughnessy looked at him through his half-closed eyelids, his parchment countenance puckered into a humorous grin, while the Mac Carthys listened with polite attention.

"Well! really," said Arthur, "I can't say I ever did see anything like it,"—he cast a reproachful look on his provoking partner; "there are not many Innisfallens to be met in foreign countries."

"Rather say none, my dear Mr. Dillon: I have seen some of the finest—" Mr. McCarthy was here cut short by an exclamation from O'Shaughnessy, who had been amusing himself like a light-hearted old boy flinging pebbles into the still-lake and watching the expanding circles they produced.

"Do you see that boat coming across from the hotel?" Certainly we all saw the boat.

"Do you see the two stiff figures in Quaker hats sitting bolt upright in the stern?" We saw them too. "Well! I shouldn't wonder if them were the Brothers Fitzmaurice! If it isn't them, I'll never hazard a guess on any given subject during my natural life."

"But, my dear sir, you don't mean the Fitzmaurices of Tralee, do you?" inquired Mr. McCarthy.

"Who else? I should like to know where else you'd find a pair of brothers like that! There, now,—look, Elinor, look—look, Mrs. Dillon! they have off their Quaker hats now to you ladies—didn't I tell you?—

well ! sure enough, that's lucky—we'll have some fun now, anyhow!" and the hilarious lawyer almost skip ped for joy as he returned the salutation of the brothers —unmistakably our Tralee friends.

" Well ! this is really an odd coincidence," said Ellen to me in a low voice ; " everywhere we have gone this summer, we were sure to meet the brothers Fitzmaurice. They are really a tiresome pair, and I must ask grand papa to leave here to-morrow, just because they're come. How very provoking ! "

" Why, what's the matter, my dear Ellen ?" I laugh ingly inquired ; " have they been making love to my sweet friend ? "

" Love ! " she evasively replied—" why, if you knew them better you wouldn't ask the question. I do believe they make love to every unmarried woman they meet—either one or other of them as chance may be. I wish they *would* get married, both of them, and then perhaps there might be an end of their flying over the country. I believe, Elinor, these two men are ubiquitous—I give you my word I do ! They once appeared to us quite suddenly on the very summit of a wild moun tain in Connemara, where we thought no more of meet ing them than if they had been sunning themselves on the Mountains of the Moon. Just look, now—they're going to land—the tiresome creatures ! "

By this time I was laughing outright, and her grand father evidently understood her feelings, and was rather amused by the strength of her antipathy to the inoffensive brothers. " Ellen, my dear," said he, with his

scurtly smile, taking her hand as he spoke, "here are some old friends of ours—you will be delighted to see them, I am quite certain. What! you will not go to meet them?—well! you are a wayward girl." And he glanced at me. "I must e'en go alone to bid them welcome. You see we are at present in possession of the island—like Alexander Selkirk, 'monarchs of all we survey,'—so it devolves on us to do the honors on behalf of the venerable religious whose home we have invaded—good morning, Messrs. Fitzmaurice!—I am rejoiced to see you again, although I did not expect that pleasure on the present occasion."

If he was pleased, the brothers were doubly pleased to see the whole party—of course excepting Ellen and myself—Shaugh was in ecstasies. If truth must be told, he had found exploring ruins rather dull work, little relieved, if any, by gliding over still waters or *bivouacing* under forest trees amid the deep silence of the woods. Change of scene was to him the end and object of travel, and for anything else in the way of *sights* he had little relish, save and except an extra fine sirloin of beef, or a juicy, well-cooked quarter of the delicious Kerry mutton, or a brace of lake wild-fowl or mountain-game,—these, or such as these, with the addition of some long-preserved wine of a favorite vintage—he was rather a *connoisseur* in wines—were the sights that had power to stir the blood within our old friend's heart, and make his small eyes twinkle with the cheerfulness of glee. Anything in the way of fun, too, or oddity of character, was always keenly relished and

made the most of by him. The Fitzmaurices had afforded him rare pleasure in Dublin by the freshness of their quaint simplicity, and they came now "in the nick of time" when he was just getting tired of Killarney. Extra-hearty, then, was the shake-hands, and the "How d'ye do?" with which the worthy lawyer greeted the landing of each brother. The Dillons, and myself, too, were tolerably sincere in our welcome, and the frank courtesy of old Dennis John almost compensated for the visible coldness of his fair granddaughter. So we were all in excellent humor—even Ellen was much too genial to let an idle whim throw a chill on the warm glow of the hour.

"But what brought you here at all?" cried Shaugh—"I mean, how did you know we were over here—lovely spot, isn't it?" looking round with anything but an admiring eye; "but a word in your ear—its devilish lonesome. For your life don't tell these lovers of nature and of art—ha—ha—ha!—what I said, or they'd cut the acquaintance—they would—they'd vote me a bear or an ourang-outang before ever I left the island! But how did you know we were here—or *did* you know it?"

To be sure, the Brothers Fitzmaurice did know it. They had seen our names in the hotel book immediately on their arrival; so as soon as they swallowed their *quantum sufficit* of creature-comforts, vulgarly called breakfast, they got a boat and were rowed over in double-quick time "to the isle of the blest."

These last words from Mr. John—who did not often

venture on quotations—were pointed by a sliding bow to us ladies, in which courteous act he was ably and promptly assisted by his brother. Ellen, grossly irreverent to the memory of poor Gerald Griffin, answered only by a very disdainful toss of her pretty head, while Maria and I bowed with what we intended for much graciousness.

As far as I myself was concerned, the arrival of the Fitzmaurices made little difference. It is true I was in no humor for quizzing at the time—the scene was far too purely beautiful, the place too sacred for trifling, but neither was I in a humor to be ruffled by anything; so I listened to the animated chit-chat going on among the Dillons, the Fitzmaurices, and merry old Shaugh, with a sort of dreamy languor—a half consciousness that was very soothing. While Mr. McCarthy and the brothers were retracing some reminiscences of Connemara, humorous notes of travel, I was repeating to myself (and by this time we were leaving the island) :

“Sweet Innisfallen! fare thee well,
May calm and sunshine long be thine,
How fair thou art let others tell,—
To feel how fair shall long be mine.

“Sweet Innisfallen! long shall dwell
In memory’s dream that sunny smile
Which o’er thee on that evening fell
When first I saw thy fairy isle.

“ ’Twas sight, indeed, too bless’d for one
Who had to turn to paths of care—
Through crowded haunts again to run,
And leave thee bright and silent there.

"No more unto thy shores to come,
But on the world's rude ocean toss'd,
Dream of thee sometimes as a home
Of sunshine he had seen and lost."

Many a time since then I have thought of that "fairy isle" and its air of unearthly peace, when the waves of trouble have surged and boiled around me, and I felt myself jostled out of the way by the busy, bustling, thriving world.

We had now seen most of what was to be seen, or at least what is usually seen by visitors at Killarney. Most of us had climbed the steep sides of Torc and Mangerton, and were amply repaid for our toil and trouble by the magnificent prospect we enjoyed; we had heard the traditional bugle of Killarney awake the wondrous echoes of the Eagle's Nest,

"When the notes of the bugle had wafted them o'er
From Denis' green isle to Glena's wooded shore,"

and one and another began to think it time to return homeward. There was nothing now to be gained by delaying; and people at home would begin to look out for us. Great was the disappointment of the Fitzmaurice Brothers when they found us about to start; why *they* had but just come, and here we were flying away. Couldn't we stay a day or two longer? They could show us many things we hadn't seen yet. But all in vain: Arthur said his father and mother would be growing anxious—Maria was dying to be at home again—Shaugh knew very well his business was going to the

dogs for want of him, (very flattering, thought I, to poor George Preston !) and myself had nothing to say ;—being merely a hanger-on to the party I had, of course, no voice in their deliberations. So, at least, I thought.

On the night before we left Killarney, I was honored with a formal proposal for my hand from Mr. John Fitzmaurice. Unfortunately for him (~~perhaps~~ for myself in a worldly sense) my eyes were so darkened that I could not see those qualities in him which I would fain see in a husband, and I told him civilly that he must excuse me : I did not think I should ever marry, but even if I did, it would not be for some time—the troubles in my own family were too recent.

“Might he hope, then, that after a year or two—suppose he waited—”

“By no means, Mr. John Fitzmaurice. I wish to deal frankly with you—do not wait a single day on me, for though I esteem you highly, I can never think of you in the way you seem to desire. Do not wait, I beg of you ; I shall be most happy to receive wedding favors when I return to town, if you can oblige me by sending them.” And with a saucy nod—I feel now that it was both saucy and provoking—and an arch smile, I escaped from the room, leaving good Mr. John to digest his disappointment at his leisure. How much he felt it at the time I really cannot say,—but I should think it was not much, for in the morning he and his brother saw us off, both of them looking as well and quite as contented as usual.

While I think of it I may as well mention here that honest John took me at my word, or rather acted on

my suggestion, for although the wedding-favors never came to hand, we actually saw, only a few weeks after, a flourishing account of his marriage in a provincial paper sent to me by post. Happy be his wedded life and smooth its course, for John Fitzmaurice was indeed a man “in whom there *was* no guile!” May his yoke-fellow and he glide as peacefully and as inoffensively through life as his friends could wish or he desire. Whether Henry ever went and did likewise I am not prepared to state; I have a sort of notion that he did not. One wife, one housekeeper was quite enough for the two attached brothers, to whom, I am sure, the thoughts of separate dwellings would be something in the highest degree preposterous. So with Anastasia Burke for a third partner, it is, I think, morally certain that their moderate desires were fulfilled, especially if Anastasia—I’m almost sure they called her Anty—is anything of a “conversable woman” or talks in any degree “like a book.”

Peace be with you, then, Fitzmaurice Brothers, best and kindest of Tralee merchants! When I now think of you, it seems as though you had been shapely, well-proportioned, but rather quaint figures reflected across my path from a magic lamp, flitting from before my eyes on that sunny morning at Killarney, and withdrawing, as it were, into that mythical world whence you came forth on that other sunny day in Adelaide Place, Dublin!

The evening after our arrival, I was summoned to the drawing-room to see Geerge, who had just heard of our

return by the kind attention of Mr. O'Shaughnessy who had called at his boarding-house for that purpose.

"And he found you in, George?" I asked reproachfully, for I had often begged of him to take more exercise, and profit by his hours of leisure to snatch a little recreation.

"Yes," he answered in a desponding, listless tone; "I was just sitting with a volume of Shakspeare in my hand, but I wasn't reading—I was thinking."

"But why were you not out, George, enjoying the beauty of the evening?"

"Well! that's what I could hardly tell you, Elinor! —I used to enjoy a good smart walk, or better still, a ride—in days when I had a horse. You remember the Shetland ponies that my poor father bought for Alfred and me—how proud we were of them, and how we used to enjoy a canter on the Rathmines Road. When the days of the Shetland ponies were past away, and Alfred left me alone, I had you or Carry to come out for a ride—but now—I have neither horse nor companion—" he stopped—he could go no further, and I, though sharing his emotion, tried to appear composed.

"But couldn't you walk?—walking is even better exercise than riding?"

George suddenly raised his eyes and looked me full in the face: "Elinor!" said he, "I am very lonely—I make no companions—I am poor, and cannot afford to spend money on amusements, which I think I could not relish were they within my reach. No one asks me to go on a tour, but, thank God, you are more

fortunate!—do you know what I have been thinking?" I answered, of course, in the negative, wondering all the time that he asked me no questions about Killarney, or my journey to and fro.

"I have been thinking of going to America."

"To America, George!—surely you are not in earnest!"

"I never was more in earnest, Elinor. Mr. O'Shaughnessy says, you know, that I'm not the cut for a lawyer. Now if that is the case—and I do rather think it is—I'll try something else before I get any older. Anything to obtain an independence. Here I don't like to be making experiments, and perhaps failing in everything I undertake. You see, Elinor, I have some of the old Preston pride in me yet," he added, with a smile—it was a sad smile too: "I'll go to America, where nobody knows me, and I'll see then whether fortune, the capricious jade! has declared irrevocably against me. But she *shall* not conquer me, Nell! for if all fails me, I'll begin at the very foot of the ladder!"

I would fain have remonstrated against this sudden project, but I must confess there was something in it that took my fancy. There was somewhere far down in my heart or mind, a latent love of adventure—a desire to see the world abroad; and though I did not at once say so, I made up my mind in an instant. One or two faint efforts I made to persuade George that he had better remain in Dublin, but he laughed them all to scorn. Seeing this I threw off the mask, and declared that I too would go to America.

“What! you, Elinor!—you brave the perilous ocean—
you expose yourself to the unknown trials of an emigrant’s life?—*you*, Elinor Preston, go seek your fortune in a strange land?—no, no!—you could never think of it!”

“And why not, pray!—what prospects have I here? My funds have dwindled down to fifteen pounds, so I must soon, or indeed at once, think of doing something. In fact, it was against my own convictions that I stayed here so long, for, with all their kindness, I cannot divest myself of the feeling of dependence; and, oh! George, but the bread of dependence *is* bitter!”

“Well! Nelly,” said George, and his fine countenance brightened up considerably, “I’m glad, and yet I’m sorry that you have made up your mind to come. But on the whole, I think,—I’m sure, we’ll both be happier together. So, in God’s name, we’ll see about it very soon.”

“How soon?”

“As soon as you like. We’ll drive out to Clongowes and to Cabra, and see Alfred and the girls. I know Carry will be in despair——”

“I think not, George. I have noticed latterly a quiet, heartfelt resignation growing on dear Carry: if I’m not much mistaken, the world has lost its hold on her. You remember what she told our mother on her death-bed?”

“Certainly I do.”

“Well! I think she has already made an offering of her life to God, for worldly matters—even where you

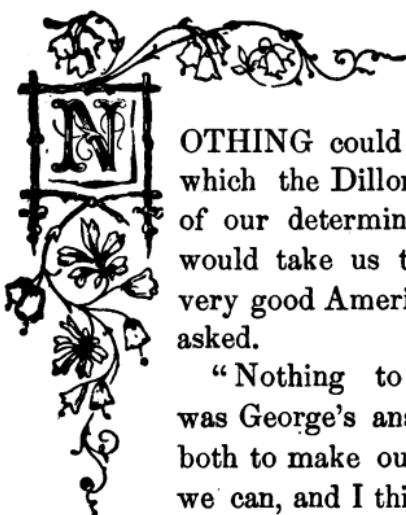
or I are concerned—seem to have now little or no interest for her. Depend upon it, she will give us no trouble. Her lot is cast."

Here we heard the shrill voice of Mrs. Dillon, senior, coming scolding along the passage. She could hardly command herself sufficiently to shake hands with George when she did make her appearance. "I declare to you, Mr. Preston! it's enough to drive any sensible woman mad to see how things go in this house. Why, there's some people in it that have no more notion of saving than if they were made of money! Well! at any rate, it won't be Stephen or me that will come to the wall—we have enough with a blessin' to last us *our* lifetime. So let them that makes the waste feel the want—that's all I have to say!—oh, dear me! dear me!!"

Neither George nor I well knew what specific to apply to the good lady's wounded feelings, so we said very little, and were well pleased when the entrance of Maria and the old gentleman relieved us from our very awkward position.



CHAPTER VI.



OTHING could equal the surprise with which the Dillons, old and young, heard of our determination. "What on earth would take us to America—hadn't we a very good America at home?" the old lady asked.

"Nothing to depend upon, ma'am," was George's answer. "Elinor and I have both to make out our living the best way we can, and I think somehow we shall do it with more energy and spirit in a new and strange country where nobody knows anything of our antecedents. Here we have—at least my sister has—the galling trammels of aristocratic birth and gentle breeding to operate against her when she comes to 'take a situation:' the position she has lost will be as a wall of brass before her, scathing her energies and chilling her hopes.' In a strange country there will be none of that: people will take us just as they find us, and we can humble ourselves to almost any employment that may

offer a fair chance of success, without having to encounter the hollow pity of pretended friends.

When called upon for my opinion, I entirely coincided with George ; and the matter was, of course, settled. The most pertinacious resistance was offered by Mr. O'Shaughnessy, but even he was at last convinced, though much against his will. From that day forward we were gradually making our preparations, carefully husbanding our small means, and calculating almost to a certainty on having a tolerable balance in our hands after all the preliminary expenses. But such was not the will of God. We were not to go forth with our pockets as well lined even as we had expected. About a week before the time appointed for our departure, I was summoned one day in great haste to Cabra to see Carry, who was "not at all well," the messenger said. When I got there, I found her delirious : she had contracted a pleurisy of some kind, most probably from a heavy cold, and had been three days in a regular fever before Emily would hear of my being sent for. She had been hoping every day to see a favorable change, but finding that the disease, on the contrary, became daily more alarming, she was forced at last to give in.

"God pity you, my poor sister," she said, as she met me at the door, "I fear there is another blow still awaiting you : I know you will not murmur against the will of God—and, besides, there is yet hope. Our sweet Carry may get through : the doctor says she has youth on her side, and a pretty good constitution."

"But, alas ! Emily's first words had struck such a

chill to my heart, that I could not bring myself just then to hope. Carry was ill—very ill—perhaps dying, so I would hardly take time to answer Emily, but ran as fast as my limbs would bear me to the sick-room. Little comfort awaited me there. The Carry who lay before me, moaning and muttering incoherently, with a flushed face and a restless, unconscious eye—her fair tresses, of which in happier days we had been all so proud, already clipped and shorn by the doctor's orders—ah! no, that was not the bright, beaming Carry to whom I used to go to unbosom myself of my little sorrows, ever sure of finding consolation in her kind word and kinder smile. Ah! no, that was not—it could not be—*my* Carry, with whom I had been consulting but a few days before on various little matters connected with my outfit. But Carry it was, unhappily for me, and as the attending physician began to apprehend that her malady might assume a contagious form, as often happens with bad pleurisies, Emily and I agreed that she must be removed at once, lest the pupils of the institution might be exposed to danger, or the interests of the house be at all affected. The kind sisters were at first very unwilling to let their favorite pupil be thus removed; but George had now arrived—I sent for him as soon as I had seen Carry—and we were all three immovable in our decision. It was no easy matter to procure a lodging for our poor unconscious patient, as no one was willing to risk taking her in, for fear of her disease turning out to be fever. At length, however, George succeeded in finding a widow lady who

had recently lost her last child, and, as she said, with a melancholy smile, she had nothing to fear if it were a fever, and a bad one too. "I have only myself, now," said she, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, "and life is not so very valuable to me that I should throw away, for fear of losing it, a golden opportunity of doing good. Bring the young lady here at once;—my accommodations are none of the best, as you see, but you will find my house perfectly clean, and I will have great pleasure in doing what I can for your dear sister."

George thanked her with a full heart, and the tears were in his eyes when he came back with his glad tidings—

"Glad tidings," I repeated, and I fancy the smile which accompanied the words was anything but cheering.

"Yes, to be sure," said George, with forced gayety; "isn't it glad tidings for you to hear that I have found a tender, compassionate heart to minister to poor Carry—ay! and a door that is hospitable enough to receive her? Go along now, you faint-hearted girl! and help Emily to get our patient ready."

But even when we had her ready, we did not get off as soon as George had calculated. There was not one member of the community who did not come to take a parting look at the unconscious sufferer, and to print a kiss on the burning brow where every vein was throbbing with fever. And thankful they were in after days that they had done so, for it was the last sight they ever had of Caroline Preston, when she was slowly

driven from their door lying on a feather bed sent by good Mrs. Butler, with George at one side and me at the other. Emily followed us down the little avenue that led to the high road, and when the carriage reached the gate, she got up on the step, and had the door opened to get another look and another kiss of her young sister, the playmate of her childish days. She had kept up well till then, but nature for the moment triumphed, and she burst into tears.

" Yet another sacrifice ! " she murmured, as she hung over the stricken lamb of the flock. " Oh, Carry ! Carry ! I hoped to have had you, at least,—you of all the world, but it seems God wishes to try me more and more : every human tie *must* be broken before the soul can reach to Him. Farewell, then, Carry ! to Him I give you up—you are His, and so am I, too. May His will be done in us ! Good-bye, Elinor,—good-bye, George ! you are a lonely pair—you two. But remember you have a host of friends in heaven, and a father and a dear mother who can and will help you in your need ! Go on now !—you needn't speak—I know all you would say. Farewell, Carry, till we meet in heaven ! "

She was gone, the door closed, and we driving slowly along the high road before a word escaped either my brother or me, and very little was said on either side till we turned down a bridle-road and stopped at Mrs. Butler's door. It was an humble but very neat cottage, with a small grass plot in front, a passion-flower, and some luxuriant wood-bine, gracefully, though thinly, shading its white-washed wall. It had the greenest of

little hall-doors and the brightest of brass knackers, and seemed as though peace, and order, and contentment were sure to abide within. And they all three might be dwellers there, if it depended on the presiding genius. It was just the quiet, sheltered, humble home I would have chosen even then ; and had Carry been restored to health I might have been tempted to remain there. Mrs. Butler was, as we expected, both a kind and a skilful nurse : and between her and me and our good old doctor, Carry had no lack of care or attention. But it was all in vain. Her days were numbered. Before the week was ended, the Great Summoner visited our calm retreat ; and at his bidding, the fever relaxed its hold, a brief interval of consciousness, but of utter prostration followed—just as though to give time for the final parting, and the reception of the last sacraments : then the tongue lost its function, the damp of death bedewed the pallid, pulseless brow, the failing hands were first extended to George and myself, then clasped on the small ebony crucifix which had been some time before placed on Caroline's bosom—the glazed eyes were turned on each of us mourners for the last time, with their wonted look of affection ; —then the eyelids fell—the long lashes lay motionless on the colorless cheek, but still the lips moved as though endeavoring to articulate the responses to the Litany for the Dying which George was reading,—a faint smile rested for a moment on the wasted though still lovely features, a slight motion of the limbs was perceptible, and then all was still. Another link of our chain was broken ; our loveliest, our brightest had taken wing from

this sad world; yet no cry, no sob escaped us—our anguish was too deep for such relief—as we half-unconsciously followed Mrs. Butler in reciting the Prayers for the Dead. Alas! we had them almost by heart—at least they were so familiar as to need no effort of memory. A day or two more, and another grave was added to the group in Glassnevin; and, in a week or so, the name of Caroline Mary Preston, aged 19, was added to the inscription (now fearfully long) on the family tombstone.

When about to leave the cemetery after the interment, when most of our friends and acquaintances were gone—only the Dillons and O'Shaughnessy remaining—who should we see but Susy Broadigan, advancing with her accustomed waddling gate to the foot of the new-made grave, and there dropping on her knees. Much surprised to see her there, we all waited a few minutes to let her finish her prayer, but seeing that she still remained motionless, George went over and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"You had better be moving home, Susy," he said, in a faltering voice; "it looks like rain."

"Ah wisha! Masther George, dear," said Susy from under her deep hood; "sure I can't go till I'm done my prayers. Didn't I walk every inch o' the road on the edge of my foot just to see the last shovelful put on my darlin' Miss Carry, and to offer up a few *pather an' ayes* over her as soon as she'd be covered. Let me alone, Masther George, dear, an' I'll be for ever obligeed to you." The tears which fell fast from her eyes attested

the sincerity of her words, and George begged her in a soothing tone not to cry so—it would do no good—

Susy cut him very short. “Not to cry, is it, sir? ah! then, sure it ‘id be no wonder if it was tears o’ blood I’d cry, let alone what it is,—sure I know, Masther George, it’ll do no good—ochone, no! but won’t it take some o’ the heavy load off o’ my heart?—och! asthore you war, Miss Carry, an’ is it you that’s lyin’ there under the could clay this blessed and holy day, an’ poor ould Susy Broadigan above-ground to cry you!” A fresh burst of weeping stopped the faithful creature’s utterance, and before she had again recovered her voice, George and Arthur Dillon had taken her by force to the carriage and lifted her in, for the clouds were, by this time, black and threatening overhead. Much did she grumble and loudly protest against this forcible injection, saying that “a coach was no place for the likes o’ her, especially with the quality in it—sure its on Shank’s mare she came, an’ she’d go back the same, please God!”

Her remonstrances were vain, however, for Mrs. Dillon would not suffer her to leave the carriage, assuring her that “she’d be wet to the skin before she got into town, and then they might have her death on them.” So poor Susy was forced to give in, and after a dry joke or two from Mr. O’Shaughnessy, which she could not refrain from answering with her usual curt humor, she drew her hood further over her face and slunk back into the corner of the carriage so as to take up as little room as possible. George and Arthur returned to town on horseback. That night, when we were about separating,

my brother laid his hand on my shoulder and his eyes filled with tears "Carry is no trouble to us now," said he, "what think you, Nelly!—aren't our obstacles fast disappearing?"

"Yes!" I answered, "death can do wonders in that way. *He* is the true *Faugh a balach*." My sorry attempt at a jest made George smile, and wi' that faint, wintry smile on his lip, he left the door, too hastily as I thought. He afterwards told me that he was afraid of my asking how our funds stood. He need not have feared any such thing, for I could as soon have asked him at the moment how much it had cost us to bury Caroline.

Although our scanty funds were fearfully diminished by our late expenses, yet our preparations went on vigorously, and in the course of a few days all was completed to our satisfaction. We thought ourselves in a fair way of getting off, when Mrs. Arthur Dillon took it into her head to make an addition to the family in the person of a chubby little girl, whose arrival created such a sensation, and was altogether so important an event, that, of course, our departure was postponed for another week or two. O'Shaughnessy and I stood for the little damsel, who received the names of Margaret-Elinor: "I wanted to have given you the name, my dear!" said Maria, "and have had *la petite* plain Elinor, but I found from certain hints thrown out that it would have been as much as the maternal favor was worth—I might have taken myself and baby off to Canadian wilds with you: so you must e'en be content with the half-compliment I

was able to pay you." Of course, I expressed my entire satisfaction.

We had a great christening of it as soon as Maria was declared out of danger. A regular Irish christening it was, consisting of all the friends and relations of the united families of Dillon and Delany. Mirth and joy abounded, and many a costly gift was made the unconscious little one : armlets and necklaces came showering in, together with richly-embroidered caps, robes, and all the other *et ceteras* which go to make up a baby ward robe. "Humph!" said Mrs. Dillon, senior, as she successively put by the rich presents ; "Humph! there's the old story over again! 'he that has a goose will get a goose!'—if baby hadn't a rag of its own to cover it, it might be naked long enough, I'm thinking, for all the presents it 'id get."

There was unfortunately too much truth in the good woman's caustic observation, but, of course, it was not meant for the ears of the disinterested donors.

A day or two after the christening, when Maria was able to appear in the drawing-room, Mr. O'Shaughnessy came one evening and gathered us all together "on business." George had come with him, for as yet he had been sharing the old man's bachelor accommodations in the dingy little house in Dominick street.

When we had all taken our places, the worthy lawyer looked with a complacent air from out his gold-mounted spectacles. For a moment his keen glance rested on me; then it passed on to George's face, and there rested.

"Master George," said he, "ahem!—I trust you're prepared to admit that you'll never do any good at the law."

"Quite so, my dear sir." We all looked at the speakers and then at each other in blank amazement. George smiled, but the old man kept quite grave and serious.

"Not the ghost of a chance at the bar, eh?—well, you're going to America to push your fortune: what do you mean to do there—tell me that, now!"

"Do! why, I'll do the best I can, certainly. I'll turn scrivener, clerk, shopman, merchant—who knows?"—the poor fellow looked round and tried to smile, but this time the attempt was unsuccessful.

"To be sure you will," gruffly said O'Shaughnessy; "I know you'll feel mighty comfortable measuring tape and ribbons to the belles of Quebec or Montreal, praising up other people's wares, and wearing your life away—your young buoyant life—behind a counter. Why, man, the ghost of your Aunt Kate would be walking in to you some day in its grave-clothes; she'd be 'revisiting the glimpses of the moon,' depend upon it, to avenge the outraged dignity of the family. And, another thing, Master George! you wouldn't stay at such a business one month—I *know you*, my fine fellow!"

George laughed—he was amused, but evidently not displeased. "But what am I to do, sir?—you say, and I confess it, that I am only losing time at the law—what am I to do?"

"Go into the army!" grunted Shaugh, and then he drew his lips together in a way peculiar to himself.

My brother started, and his face was crimson in a moment. "That's easier said than done, Mr. O'Shaughnessy—besides——"

"Besides nonsense!—none of your humbugging now—you know you always had a hankering after the army—you can't deny it!"

"Well! I own I had, sir, but that was in days when the purchase of a commission was within the range of probability—now, it were idle to think of any such thing."

"Not a bit of it, George, not a bit of it," and the old man's eyes twinkled, and he rubbed his fat hands together in a little ecstasy of mysterious enjoyment. "I see you're all on the tenter-hooks, as the saying is; so, George, the short and the long of it is that I've got a commission for you. You know Lord D—— is an old friend of mine, and through his interest at the Horse Guards I got the commission—ay! without paying one penny." The old man said nothing about a certain long-standing debt which would almost have paid for the commission, and which he cancelled in favor of his noble friend and former client. George said nothing, but he seized O'Shaughnessy's hand and shook it warmly, the tears standing in his eyes. But the next moment his eye met mine, and his countenance fell.

"Never mind Elinor," said this true friend, "I didn't forget *her*; I managed it so that you're to exchange with a young fellow whose regiment is now in Canada. I know Nell is tired of us all, and I want to let her see her hobby out. She'll be glad to come back to us yet, bad

as we are. But to Catholic Canada she wants to go, and there she shall go, if we fitted out a boat for her own self."

"But, dear sir! how—how shall we thank you—how repay you?" I faltered out.

"As to thanks, keep *them* to yourself, children!—as to the payment, you have only to think now and then of rough old Shaugh, when you're far away among strangers—and to let him know if you ever want a friend!—good evening to you all—George! are you coming home —ha! ha! it will soon be a lonely home—I think I must look out for a wife—eh, Mrs. Dillon!—you'll help me, eh!—that's a decent woman—much obliged to you!"

The days which intervened between that and our departure were days of bustle and joy, and sorrow and hope, all strangely jumbled together. There was so much to be done and so many people to be seen and taken leave of that we were all in a flurry, and I think the Dillon stud, had they voices to speak, would have loudly protested against the whole affair, for they were almost constantly in harness. George was all at once elevated to the seventh heaven of hope and expectation, and so exhilarating was the effect of the change in his prospects, that not even the parting from Emily and Alfred could depress his spirits to anything like their recent level. Neither Emily nor Alfred was at all pleased with George's choice of a profession, and they said they would only have to redouble their prayers for him, now that he was about entering on a career of increased peril.

"Why, surely," said George, with a gay laugh, "you don't consider the military profession more dangerous to the soul than the legal? only think a moment, my reverend brother, and you, as a son of Loyola, will rather congratulate me on my choice. The path which led your founder to perfection cannot surely be unsafe for me. Where can you point to a lawyer on the calendar? whereas, you can't deny that it's full of soldiers."

"You forget St. Alphonso Liguori—" said Alfred, with a sad smile.

"Oh! well, what if I did—it wasn't by law *he* got on the calendar either. Come, come, Alfred! no more misgivings—you know as well as I do that a man may save his soul in the army, as well as at the bar or in the senate—"

"Yes, but his peril is greater—his temptations more numerous: a man wilfully entering on such a career is like one who commits himself to the raging ocean, believing that he can stem and resist its force. Ah! George, my dear, my only brother! would to God that you had consulted me before you took this step! As for our good friend, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, I wonder at him—"

"Not a word against *him*, for your life, Father Alfred! —he is a glorious old fellow, and has a heart as big as an ox. Good-bye, my dearest brother! companion of my childhood! we are certainly taking contrary paths on earth, but with the assistance of your prayers and those of our dear Emily, even I will hope to meet you all in heaven. We may meet again, even here, but if

we should not, be well assured that your brother, with God's help, will live and die as becomes a Preston."

During all this discourse I had sat in tearful silence with my hand clasped in that of Alfred, and now, when the final moment was come, that dear brother transferred my hand to George, saying in a low tremulous voice : "There, George, to your care I confide our Elinor —watch over her, I adjure you in God's name, for in a land of strangers she will have only you. You must be to her more than a brother, George, since God has deprived her of all but you."

"And so I mean to be," was George's answer—he could say no more. Then Alfred took a hand of each of us and pressed them fervently within his own, raised his eyes to heaven for a moment in earnest supplication, then dropping the hands he held, he retired from the room. It was easy to see that his strength was exhausted, for his pale cheek and bloodless lip could not fail to strike even less interested beholders. Dear Alfred ! how spiritual he looked in that last sad moment with his long fair hair overshadowing a brow of almost feminine whiteness, and his thin, delicate features already impressed with the withering touch of the disease which had broken the first clasp of our happy family. His deep blue eyes—my mother's eyes—were full of soul, and in that moment of unrestrained affection they looked on us as tenderly as hers were wont to do: their expression touched our hearts, and as we drove away from the gate, George murmured . "I did him wrong once, poor fellow—he *has* a heart, and a good one too—" we

both involuntarily raised our eyes to the upper windows at the moment, and at one, hastily thrown up, stood Alfred, looking after us with tearful eyes, as we knew by the handkerchief in his hand. George made a parting gesture, I another, and then the carriage swept round a turn in the road, and our brother was seen no more.

On the following day we embarked in one of the Liverpool steamers, there to take our passage in one of the Black Ball Line of Packets for New York. A number of our friends accompanied us on board, and when the gangway was about to be removed, Mr. O'Shaughnessy took us aside for a moment. Shaking hands with me he squeezed a tiny parcel into my hand, telling me to put it away carefully till I got to the other side, "and now, once for all, I tell you, children," said he, "if you should ever find yourselves in want—mind you *in want*—don't hesitate a moment but write to me, and we'll see what can be done, although you *are* turning your backs on me in my old age. And mind if you ever come back to Ireland, come straight to my little place, and if you see the name of Terence O'Shaughnessy on it, go in, in God's name, sure of finding a warm welcome,—if there's some other name on it, or none at all, you may say, 'God's will be done—poor old Shaugh is gone home at last, and we may look elsewhere for a friend. There, children, don't cry—what do you laugh at, Master George!—because I'm calling you a *child* still, I suppose, and you feeling yourself already a soldier—I will, then, George!—for didn't I see you when you were a child and a small child too, and that not so many years

ago either—so none of your manish airs with me. But as I live there's the gangway going to be moved, and here's Maria and Arthur, and old Stephen, and Madam Dillon, all to kiss and shake hands—cut it short now, friends all, unless you want to have a trip across the channel.'"

The blessings and farewells were all exchanged, the last friendly hand was shaken, the last "God speed you" was vibrating on the air, there was a hurrying of feet over the gangway—it was snatched away with professional quickness, and the water already divided us from the warm-hearted friends whom we were leaving perhaps for ever. There they stood in a group, watching us with tearful eyes, as we watched them, and when the distance between us had increased, waving hats and handkerchiefs, until their forms waxed dim and misty in the far distance, and finally disappeared from our view. George and I looked into each other's eyes by a common impulse—we had severed many a strong tie—the companions of long and happy years, ay! even those whom we had found friends in need, we had left them behind, and were turning our faces to a land where all was strange and untried—where we knew no one—had no claim on any one—yes! well might we gaze at each other in silence and each in their own heart for a moment doubt the prudence of the adventurous step. It was only a moment, however, until George resumed—perhaps I might say *assumed* his now natural gayety and drawing my arm within his said in a cheerful tone: "Come now, Elinor! no despondency, if you love me!"

—we're in for it, in any case, so let us just make the best of it. For myself, thank God! my path is plain, it is only for you I would fear or doubt, but I do neither, so mind and follow my example!" I smiled faintly, and George rattled on. "Do you remember, those lines which we saw in a newspaper some time ago, Elinor?"

"As vanisheth the fleeting dream—
As leaves that part upon the tide—
So, 'tis our lot on life's swift stream—
(Perchance forever) to divide;
Or meet perhaps in years to come
As cold as if we ne'er had known—"

Well! the former may happen, but I'll be sworn the latter never will—Shaugh and the rest could never be cold to us, nor we to them—that's *one* comfort."

Unconsciously I imbibed a portion of my brother's hopeful spirit, and by the time the boat got out into the Bay, we were both prepared to enjoy the wondrous beauty of the surrounding scene. Often had we watched the golden sunset fading across the lovely bay, lingering among the white sails and tall masts of the shipping, giving richness as well as beauty to the verdant tints of field and grove, and crowning Ben-Edir's* brow as with a gorgeous diadem of light, then shedding a parting beam on Dalkey, and Lambay, and Ireland's Eye far out in the waters, but never had all this seemed so lovely as now, when we were leaving our native land, it might be for ever. As we stood side by side looking

* Ben-Edir,—the Irish name for the Hill of Howth.

out on the swiftly passing landscapes, the tears dimmed our eyes as each familiar object was left behind. From the far-off Dublin and Wicklow mountains, already half enveloped in the purple mist of evening, to the homely old Pigeon-House close by us, we breathed a heartfelt blessing on all, and still more warmly did we bless the guileless hearts, the true hearts who make the real sunshine of the Emerald Isle.

I would gladly have remained on deck to see the moon rising for the last time over those "scenes of richest bloom," but a strong breeze happening just then to spring up, the boat began to heave and my head began to reel, and it was just as much as I could do to reach my berth, even with George's assistance. So there I was, regularly sea-sick, and for the remainder of the short voyage I was unable to leave my bed. What a night of horror that was, to be sure, cooped up in my narrow crib, suffering in every member, every heave and lurch of the small steamer bringing an increase of torture. Many a time did I wish from my heart that I was quietly snoozing in my comfortable chamber in Adelaide Place, where, with my present experience, I should have been most happy to remain. Towards morning I became somewhat better, and when I was able to crawl out of the ladies' cabin, I met George just at the door, and had the satisfaction of hearing that he had escaped the horrors of sea-sickness. The boat had just stopped, and even that was no small relief to my dizzy head. But, better still, George hurried me off to a hotel, where I had the luxury of that best of specifics

for such maladies, a good cup of tea, and after that, a couple of hours of refreshing sleep ; then I arose, if not in renovated health and spirits, at least well enough to accompany George on a sight-seeing expedition. Unfortunately there was not much to see except a wilderness of black, smoky buildings, and a forest of masts, yards, and flags, growing up in apparently inextricable density and confusion from the bosom of the Mersey river. After we had made the circuit of Nelson's monument, admired the Merchant's Exchange, and the Music Hall, walked up and down a few of the principal thoroughfares—in fact, the place is throughout one vast thoroughfare—we began to find out that there was little beauty and less variety to be seen in that most dingy and ill-favored city. Never was I so tired of a place, for the noise, the endless din of commerce, was absolutely deafening, and, unlike other cities, there is no part of Liverpool that you can call quiet. It is the great market-place where the whole world seems to transact its business. How any one can live—at least, enjoy life—in such a Babel, I cannot understand. To me there is something oppressive in the crowded thoroughfares of a great city, something that awes and depresses me ; in Liverpool this was especially the case, and never did I feel a more overpowering sense of loneliness than I did while its thousand, thousand voices rang in my ears, and its multitudes hurried past me to and fro in perpetual motion. Still we had only a day to wait there, and when I had once regained the privacy of my front-chamber in the hotel, I felt comparatively quiet, and was well disposed to "take mine ease"

in a large *fauteuil* near the window, which happening to overlook the street gave me an opportunity of studying the various costumes and peculiarities of people from almost every clime. George, on the contrary, preferred to stroll at leisure through the streets, in order to see everything that was at all worth seeing.

In the evening we went on board the packet—a noble specimen she was too, of those stately sea-hostelries which have ferried millions of the adventurous sons and daughters of the British Islands across the Atlantic in search of fortune. Many packets belonging to rival lines were drawn up along the wharves, like cabs and omnibuses in waiting for fares at boat landings and railroad dépôts, but certainly there was none to exceed our own, at least in appearance. Our good opinion of her was fully borne out during the voyage, when she gallantly withstood more than one stiff gale, and we learned from some of the officers on board that that was her seventy-fourth trip across the Atlantic, in all which time she had never sustained any serious injury. She was a stately vessel truly, and for my part, I had such confidence in her strength and power that my fears of the sea were almost overcome, as I looked with a feeling akin to pride on her noble proportions while dropping down the Mersey with the evening tide. People may talk of the wonders of this age of steam, and glorify themselves on the increased facilities of communication, but, as I am no merchant, and have, consequently, no particular inducement to span the ocean with preternatural swiftness, I am free to admit that I would rather

spend three weeks or so coming across beneath the wings of the good old "fast-sailing" line-of-packet ships, than run the risk of being scalded to death, or blown to atoms by the pretentious steam-monsters which shoot with their passengers from Liverpool to New York at the imminent risk of life and limb. All honor, then, to the good old-fashioned, copper-keeled packets, who never troubled their own or other people's heads with steam or any such inventions, but plodded like patient mules, week after week, over and athwart the mountain-billows of Neptune's kingdom, quailing only before the storm, and, in general, landing their passengers with whole bones, just where they bargained for, instead of despatching them to the regions beyond the Styx, which is often the case with their more popular and more fashionable competitors of the hot water department.

. Fortunately for me I was little troubled with seasickness on the passage out. It would seem as though the disease had exhausted its virulence in that first grand attack, for even the longest and heaviest swells of the Atlantic wave produced no corresponding throes or spasms in the region of my stomach. A little dizziness, bordering at times on headache, was the worst symptom I felt on shipboard, so that I had nothing to hinder me from observing surrounding objects, and taking notes of what was going on among my fellow-passengers. For the first few days I seldom ventured on deck, at least after we had cleared the British seas and lost sight of the Irish coast which had been again visible for some time, ~~as~~ we sped on towards the wide ocean. It was early

morning when we came in sight of our own dear island, and it made my heart bound with a thrill of sympathy to see the rush from below when some one cried out "The Irish Coast!" Instantly from steerage and second-cabin hurried an eager crowd, all urging each other to be quick "for fear they'd miss the sight." But there was no need, for there in full view lay the Mountains of Wicklow bright in the morning sun, and we were sailing so near the shore that we could easily distinguish the yellow corn-fields, and green pastures, and stately sea-side villas. Many a fervent blessing was wasted then over the waters, and as we above on the quarter-deck leaned over the gunwale to murmur our own fond farewell, the depths of our souls were stirred by the many-voiced wail which arose from the deck below. Never did I feel so intense a sympathy as at that moment—never was I so sensible to the mighty strength of the bond which binds together the children of one country—that country, moreover, an "island of sorrow."

When the broken line of the Irish coast was, at length, waxing dim, and "the Green hills of holy Ireland" were fading into mist, it was pitiful to see the heavy sorrow of the homeless multitude. Gray-haired men and women strained their failing eyes to catch the last sight; mothers and fathers held up their little ones to look at their fatherland once again, and fix the fleeting vision on their minds, ere it vanished for ever. Strong men stood leaning in moody silence against the vessel's side, regardless of the trickling tears which, at another time and under other circumstances, they would have

been ashamed to shed. Half unconsciously I murmured some verses of an old song which I had loved in happier hours :

“The last breeze from Erin
 Has passed o'er my brow,
 The gale of the ocean
 Is over me now ;
 I leave thee, my country !
 Farewell ! though thou art
 The life-pulse that stirs me,
 The veins of my heart—
 Erin, mavourneen, farewell !

I gaze where the bright scene
 Falls back to the west,
 And tinges the blue clouds
 That hang o'er thy breast :
 The bark bears me from thee
 To sail o'er the deep,
 While on thy green bosom
 I gaze,—and I weep ;
 Erin, mavourneen, farewell !

* * *

“Farewell ! for no longer
 I gaze on thy shore ;
 The mists are between us—
 I view thee no more !
 Perhaps to my country
 I breathe the last strain ;
 Perhaps I may never
 Behold thee again ;
 Erin, mavourneen, farewell !

By the time I had ended, we had seen “the last glimpse of Erin,” and with a feeling of utter desolation, I took George’s arm, and said, “Let us go in—we have

nothing to look at now." So there we were—far out at sea—with no speck of land in sight, nothing but the boundless firmament and the green, billowy ocean—the earth's mighty girdle stretching round and round, without beginning or end, like the vaster ocean of eternity. The evening came on with mist and shadow—cold, dull, and gray ; the gull and the curlew still hovered around in the eddying circles, shrieking as it were in concert, and flapping their wings by way of accompaniment to their own discordant music. It was a cheerless evening, as it ought to be when so many hearts were weighed down with sorrow, and hope itself was for the moment extinguished. The night was calmer and passed off better than we expected, however ; and with the morning's light the elastic spirit of the passengers seemed to spring up again, and in little groups they began to appear on deck gazing with curious eyes on the new little world in which they found themselves.



CHAPTER VII.



HE twenty-four days of our *voyage* passed away more pleasantly than we could have expected. Some of our fellow-passengers in the cabin were both agreeable and entertaining, especially one old gentleman from the north of England, who with his son and daughter were going to New York on a mission partly commercial, partly official. No people can be more courteous or more affable than the English, if you happen to please them, and somehow this family seemed to take to us from the very beginning of our acquaintance. Even when our luggage was being taken on board, Mr. Wortley contrived to make room for it in a certain convenient little nook which he had obtained for his own by special privilege, the captain and he having, it appeared, been schoolboys together. The captain's wife was also on board, a neat, tidy, thrifty Englishwoman, who made herself generally useful in providing for the comfort of her fellow-passengers. She was a straightforward, matter-of-fact little body, very good-tempered, and well

disposed to be pleased with every one. Among the other cabin-passengers, male and female, there were but few who had any marked characteristics, with the exception of one elderly gentleman who was wofully afraid of injuring his health, and whose greatest amusement seemed to consist in experimenting on the strength of his own constitution, and its capacity for enduring drugging. This good man had quite a little medicine-chest with him, and to do him justice, if he set a high value on its contents himself, he was exceedingly generous in dispensing them to all who chose to use them. It was matter of surprise to all of us how well this poor gentleman seemed to thrive on his pills and medicaments. There was not a man on board in better condition; but it would have been no small affront to tell him so, for he was, or seemed to be, fully convinced that he was wasting away day by day under the action of some strange, unknown disease, which baffled the skill of all the doctors. Good Mrs. White, the captain's wife, was, strange to say, the only one on board who systematically annoyed poor Mr. Hampton, and this she did in her oblivious kindness, regularly insisting at table on his being helped off some good substantial joint, giving as her reason that it was just some nourishing food he wanted. "A big stout man like you, Mr. Hampton, can't live without eating, and eating well! If I were you, my dear sir! I'd throw the doctor's stuffs overboard, and take to the beef and mutton."

This well-meant but mistaken kindness usually stirred up the good man's bile, and more than once he left the

table in high dudgeon, and would hardly speak to **Mrs.** White for some hours after, till a bowl of arrow-root, or water gruel, or some such panacea was sent to his berth as a peace-offering. Many a time did the captain and others beg of the good lady not to volunteer her advice to the *soi-disant* invalid, and as often did she promise to act accordingly; but after a meal or two at most her memory would lapse again, and the sight of Mr. Hampton's large, fleshy countenance at the further end of the table would suggest the idea of the greasy aliments on which *bons vivants* usually fatten. She never could remember, apparently for any length of time, the existing connection between that prototype of Dickens' fat boy and the infantile slops with which he chose to fill his "fair round belly."

This was all capital fun to the rest of us, but apart from that *we* had entertainment on board of a widely different kind. George and myself often sat for hours listening to the conversation of the steerage and second-cabin passengers as they lounged on the main-deck, and around the gangway stairs. Gradually we learned to know them individually and by their names, and by close attention we obtained an insight into many of their peculiarities, together with snatches of their "simple story." Many a little romance of real life might be fabricated from the affairs of those three hundred emigrants, some of them Welsh, some of them Scotch and English, but the greater number Irish. Among these there was an endless variety of circumstance and condition. There were families of two generations—a ven-

erable grandfather or grandmother, apparently tottering on "life's narrow verge," yet breaking asunder at the voice of strong affection the ties of country and of home, to follow the son or daughter and their family into their voluntary exile. Some of these families were large—quite large enough to form a busy little community within themselves. These, we observed, were lively and cheerful, buoyed up with hope and expectation, caring little, apparently, for the unknown dangers and trials which might await them, so long as they were all together. Others there were—lone men and women—who had been sent for by their children in America, and were going, full of hope, to share the good fortune of those who had preceded them to the El Dorado. Well for them that the veil of the future was impenetrable to their eyes, else had they not been so sanguinely cheerful in quitting their old home. These were in general an interesting class to us; but we specially singled out one Widow Mahony, a tall, thin old woman, whose scrupulous neatness, and evident superiority to those around her, could not fail to command respect. She had two daughters in Philadelphia—"all she had in the world," as she said herself; "and as God put it in their hearts to send for her, she was venturin' out to them, though it was a hard thing to cross the sea at her time of life, when in the coarse of nature she hadn't long to live: but sure if God only spared her to get to the girls, she'd be the happiest poor woman alive, an' if it was his will to take her to himself the next day she'd be well content." Poor Widow Mahony! her resignation

was severely tasked. The very day before we reached the banks of Newfoundland, we saw her frail body committed to the deep. She died thanking God that she had been to her duty the day before she left home. Next to her grievous disappointment in not living to see her daughters, she appeared most depressed by the thought that she was not to have Christian burial. It was unnatural, she said, for a Christian to be thrown out into the sea like a dead dog, instead of being decently covered up in the ground among their own flesh and blood; but, sure, after all, at the last day, the sea would have to give up its dead as well as the land, and what difference would there be then? But och! och! if she had only lived to see Jane and Ellen—and them losing the money they sent to bring her out—"God comfort them," were almost her last words, "for they'll have the sorrowful hearts when they hear that the old mother they hadn't seen for six years died a-shipboard, and was thrown ~~out~~ into the sea. O! Blessed Virgin! you were sorrowful, too,—you'll comfort them, then, on account of your own heavy sorrow an' mine!"

Poor Mrs. Mahony's hard fate was much lamented, for she had made for herself many friends on shipboard; and there were few dry eyes amongst the Irish passengers when her body was consigned to its watery grave. Hers was the only death that occurred during the voyage, and it gave us an opportunity of witnessing that very solemn and affecting sight, a burial at sea.

Another most interesting class of the emigrants were the young girls, many of whom were there wholly un-

protected, some of them very pretty, and many the picture of guileless innocence. To say the truth, however, the great majority of them were both stout and sturdy, well fitted for battling with the world, judging, at least, by the courage and resolution which they displayed in fighting for their turn at the common fire on deck. It was really amusing to get within sight and hearing of what went on there during the process of cooking the meals. There was a general scramble for the fire on these occasions, the rule, of course, being "first come, first served;" and as the sea air usually sharpens the appetite, hunger gave a corresponding keenness to the temper of the eager expectants. Sometimes the sparing was confined to a few, but at other times it assumed a more general character, and was carried out on national grounds. Happily the parties never came to blows, or I know not what might have been the consequence, the belligerents being armed with such missiles as saucepans, frying-pans, and gridirons, not to speak of other more deadly weapons. It was curious to see how the bolder and more confident—the blusterers and the swaggerers made their way there just as they do in the world, while the modest and the timid were thrust aside and compelled to wait till the clamorous disputants had each served their turn.

Among the prettiest of the young girls whom we noticed on board was one whose name we found to be Margaret Gilmartin. She was about nineteen or twenty—not more at the utmost—and was evidently unskilled in the ways of the world, for, with all her beauty,—and

she was really beautiful—there was about her an air of almost childish bashfulness—a shy, gazelle-like expression of countenance that excited your pity and interested you at once in the gentle, modest creature. She had not a soul on board belonging to her, and it was, from the first, matter of surprise to me how she had been suffered to tempt the dangerous ocean all alone—so young, so innocent, so timid as she was. Surely, I used to think, she must have some friends at home. I soon found myself mistaken. The only one on board who knew anything of her was a respectable old man named Rafferty, who was from her own place, and in whose care she had been placed by the family in whose service she had been living. Her story was very simple, and withal very common in the history of emigration. She was an only child. He father had gone out to America several years before, leaving his wife and daughter in their little cottage near the foot of one of the Galtee mountains, expecting to send for them within the year, if God prospered his endeavors. Alas ! he was hardly a month in his employment—he was a mason by trade—when he fell from a scaffold some forty feet to the ground, and was all but killed. He was taken up insensible, with a leg and arm broken, and for three long months he lay in an hospital, hovering for weeks of that time between death and life. That was only the first of a series of misfortunes ; several times he had had sufficient, or nearly sufficient, to bring out the wife and daughter for whom his heart yearned, and as often had some untoward accident occurred to

scatter his little hoard, and postpone the meeting so fondly desired by all three. He had occasionally sent home money, however, and this kept hope alive. But the dismal year of the famine came on, and the neighboring farmers who had given employment to Norah Gilmartin and her little daughter were, with their families, reduced to beggary and starvation. No more spinning, no more weeding, no more "dropping" or "gathering" of potatoes—nothing to be got even for charity, so at last mother and child were forced to go into the poorhouse in order to escape starvation. A dismal resource that was, for the food was hardly sufficient, either in quantity or quality, to keep body and soul together. Mother and child, too, were separated kept in different rooms, and when they did meet for a moment, it was in the presence of strangers, when they were not allowed to converse. Under this heavy pressure of affliction, the mother's heart soon gave way : her body—never of the strongest, and much worn latterly by sorrow, and privation, and hard work,—soon became the prey of disease, and she "died gray-haired, in youth"—the beautiful mother of beautiful Margaret Gilmartin. After a while the desolate orphan was sent out to service, and fortunately for her she fell into good hands. For the last three or four years she had been tolerably comfortable, being treated by the family with great kindness, and her work made as light as possible, but still she had pined for a sight of her only parent, to be near whom was her heart's fondest wish. When, at length, her father sent for her, she got ready with all.

possible alacrity, and was now on her way to Boston, where he resided, hoping to find in his love and protection, all and more than all she had lost.

Half the young men on board were evidently attracted by Margaret's pretty face and her air of maidenly reserve. She appeared, in fact, to create quite a sensation, although she was, or seemed to be, wholly unconscious. Latterly, however, I had noticed her somewhat paler and more dejected than usual. On the day of poor widow Mahony's death, I was sitting alone towards evening on the quarter-deck, when old Rafferty, partly ascending the gangway steps, made a sign that he wished to speak to me. Touching his hat with respect, the old man said, in a low voice, as I approached him: "I made bold, miss, to speak to you about a thing that's troublin' me, because I know you take an interest in us all."

"Certainly I do, my good man!—what is it that troubles you now?"

"Why, it's all about that poor *gersha*, miss, that the master and mistress at home gave me in charge. I'm afeard that purty face of hers isn't for her good."

"Why do you think so?"

"Well, you see, miss, she's a soft, innocent sort of a *coleen*, with no sharpness at all in her, an' there's some of these chaps hereabouts that's puttin their *comether* on her."

"And what if they do?" I asked, with a smile; "didn't somebody put a *comether* (as you say) on her mother before her. It might be well for her, after all, if

she and some decent young man made it up together to be married as soon as they'd come to shore. She'll be sure of protection then, you know."

"Oh! but that isn't what I mean at all, miss,—I wish to goodness it was only that."

"Why, what in the world is it, then?" I asked in some surprise.

"It's one of the mates, miss," and the old man dropped his voice to the lowest pitch, and looked cautiously round at the same time; "it's one of the mates—I think the first mate—that's makin freer than I'd like with little Margaret. I didn't mind much at first, so long as she kept him at a civil distance, but I'm afraid, miss, she's beginnin' to give too much heed to what the fellow says to her, an' he's a fine likely fellow, too. Now, I'm sure an' sartain he'd never think of marrying a poor bit of a girleen like her, but he'll make her b'live anything he likes, and the longer she's in his way it's all the worse. So I just thought I'd ask your advice, miss, for I know you have the knowledge an' the understandin' that me and the likes o' me hasn't, God help us!"

I candidly told the old man that his fears were far from being unfounded, and I promised—with a heavy heart, I confess—to do what I could. I knew well enough there was no use talking to the girl herself. In such a case as that, the only thing was to keep her out of harm's way if possible. I went straight to Mrs. White, the captain's wife, and told her the story just as I heard it. Cool and passive as she usually was, she got quite excited before I had come to the end.

"Oh! the villain!" she exclaimed; "he has a wife and three children over on the Cheshire shore of the Mersey. Wait till I get my eyes on him—if I don't expose him, never trust me for an honest woman!"

I hastily explained to the good lady that any open interference on her part would in all probability make matters worse, and I told her if she wished really to serve the girl, she would take her as a servant at once, and keep her so constantly engaged under her own eye that the enemy would have no further chance.

"Well! I really have no need of her——"

"No matter, my dear madam; a week or so will bring us to land, and when she is once sent off to her father we have no further care of her. Only let us keep her out of the fangs of this serpent while on shipboard, for she is young, artless, and inexperienced; and I have heard many a sad tale of unprotected creatures, such as she, being seduced and corrupted on their passage to America. For God's sake take her into the cabin, apparently to wait on you, and I will pay you whatever you think it right to pay *her*."

My entreaties prevailed. That very evening Margaret Gilmartin was taken into the cabin as Mrs. White's servant, to the great dissatisfaction of all the other young girls on board who were disposed to regard her promotion with envy. The girl herself, though evidently proud of the distinction, was still very fond of straying to the forepart of the vessel, visiting the main-deck (ostensibly on her way to the steerage) much oftener than we could wish, and I had another cautious, stealthy

visit from old Rafferty on the subject. After this I saw that we must go a step further, and I accordingly got Mrs. White to bring in this Porter's name and mention his wife and family, one day at the dinner-table, just when I knew Margaret was within hearing. The captain, though knowing nothing of what was going on, took up the subject at once and spoke in very high terms of Porter's wife, saying that he had known her since she was no higher than the table, for her father was a brother-tar of his own—they were mates together for years not few on board the old North Briton. Just then a sound as of some one sobbing made Mrs. White and myself exchange glances. The sound was from my room, so I made a sign to her not to move, and withdrew from the table as quietly as I could. Sure enough when I entered my little room and closed the door after me, there I found poor Margaret bathed in tears, and as pale as a ghost. I sat down by her and tenderly inquired what was the matter. For some time I asked in vain—the poor girl doing all she could to suppress her tears and sobs for fear of being heard in the cabin. But the effort was too much for her, and when I again repeated my question, she murmured in a broken whisper that told the shame and anguish of her heart: "Oh ! Miss Preston, dear, isn't that the villain of the world ? "

" Who, Margaret ? "

" Oh ! Mr. Porter—who else ! Sure didn't he tell me all along he'd marry me when we'd get to shore ; an' it was only last night he made me promise that as soon as we got to New York I'd go with him to the

priest's house ! Oh ! God help me this day ! what 'id become of me at all if I had gone with him ! Miss Preston dear, an' jewel, hadn't I the blessin' of God, an' some poor body's blessin' into the bargain ? But do you think, miss, that there's no mistake in it—is he—is he—married ? ”

“ Why certainly, Margaret ! I heard Mrs. White speak several times of him as a married man——”

“ Well ! the Lord be praised anyhow that I found it out in time ! ” She sighed as though her heart would break. “ But och ! och ! who'd think he could have such badness in him ?—he has sich a smooth tongue an' sich a deceitful way with him ! ”

“ But now that you have found him out, my poor girl, I hope you will carefully avoid his company for the few days that remain of our voyage ? ”

“ Oh ! never fear, miss !—never you fear that ! ” she whispered with an energy that startled me, it was so unexpected ; “ if he ever dared to say a soft word to me again, I'd expose him before all the passengers—no ! no ! I'm so much ashamed of myself now for listenin' to him at all, that I hate *myself* a'most as much as I do *him* ! Avoid him, indeed !—you'll see if I don't—he took *me* for a fool, but he'll find himself the greatest fool of the two. It's the best of his play for him to keep out of my way for the time to come.”

She then requested me to say nothing to any one of what had happened, and I cheerfully promised what she desired, as a few words to assure Mrs. White of the suc-

cess of our innocent stratagem was, I knew, no betrayal of trust.

Next day I was uncharitable enough to be well pleased when I overheard my good old friend, Mr. Wortley, asking the captain what in the world had happened to that good-looking first-mate of his.

"Faith! I don't know," and the captain smiled with the easy good nature of a jovial Englishman, "I see he has his arm in a sling to-day. He shayed off so when I asked him how he got it, that I rather think he must have been larking among the girls below!"

"The deuce he was—serve him right, if so!" was Mr. Wortley's half-jocular answer. "That will teach him to 'let the girls alone,' following the advice of an old song I once heard, I believe in Ireland!"

When I was next alone with Margaret I asked her if she knew anything about the wounded arm, whereupon she significantly upraised the broom she was then using, and pointed to its handle with a blushing cheek and a knowing smile, accompanied with a shake of her pretty head, as much as to say: "*I gave it to him—I did—much good may it do him!*" Then and there I shook hands with the spirited little Tipperary lass, and from that moment I took a heartfelt interest in her welfare.

From this incident I clearly saw the fearful dangers to which unprotected emigrant girls are exposed in their transit from Europe to America. My heart swelled with indignation as I thought of the manifold snares laid for their innocence, both on board the emigrant ship and on the foreign shore to which they are hastening in

search of a home, and I could not help saying to Mrs. White,—whose kind heart was much affected by this occurrence: “What would I not give to be able to warn all young girls about to emigrate of the numerous dangers to which their virtue is exposed before they reach their destination, and even after they do reach it—dangers much more imminent than those of the ocean in its wrath. If they only knew how many defenceless creatures of their sex and country fall a prey every season to these human monsters, they would cling to the ruined homesteads where their parents, perhaps, died of famine,—ay! cling to them till death, and be buried with honor and decency by kindly hands in the old churchyard where their fathers sleep, rather than cross the ocean to become foul and loathsome things, the prey of the vilest passions, the disgrace of their country and their race!”

The good-natured, placid Englishwoman could by no means understand the warmth with which I spoke, but she said it was really too bad, and wondered that girls *would* expose themselves to such danger—“they ought certainly to stay at home,” said she, “if they have no near relatives to come out with.” In which opinion I quite concurred. On the whole I found Mrs. White so kind and so motherly in her way that I really felt sorry when the time of our parting came, the more so as there was little probability of our ever meeting again. The Wortleys, too, and even our good-natured hypochondriac, Mr. Hampton, had each and all contributed to beguile the tedium of the voyage. Our vessel anchored over

night in New York Bay, right in front of Staten Island, and while the captain and his wife entertained us in the cabin with a farewell supper, whereat appropriate songs were sung and appropriate toasts given with right good will, our ears apprised us that the passengers below were making merry in their own fashion. There appeared to be more than one violin among them,—as indeed we had found out at an early period of the voyage—and if they were neither of them Cremonas, nor any of the players likely to make their fortune by fiddling in the New World, they had the effect of making the people forget for a while their cares and sorrows and gloomy forebodings. Dancing was kept up down there all the evening with little intermission and with such spirit that the boards of the good ship creaked responsively. There is no knowing when the farewell *soirée* might have ended had not the signal been given for putting out the lights—I rather think somewhat before the usual time, owing to Porter's stirred-up gall; whereupon the hundreds of weary exiles who had been for a brief space so happily oblivious of their lot, consigned themselves to their various berths—few of them to sleep, as I could tell by the experience of that night—but to cover in their restless minds all their preconceived ideas of the *terra incognita* on which they were to land by the morrow's light. That night was, as it were, the threshold between two stages of life. It was neither of the past nor of the present, but a solitary measure of time, separating them one from the other.

Early next morn'ng commenced the great bustle at

tending the breaking up, as it were, of a huge household. There was little time for either thought or speech, or it might have been a general leave-taking. When the doctor, from on shore, had made his professional inspection, and pronounced us all in a healthy condition—(I wonder would his report be couched in different terms had he been able to examine *hearts!*) we were at once declared “free to go,” and then, as if by magic, the passengers were all in motion, all tired of the sea and eager, apparently, to get on shore, all scanning with curious eyes the coast which they were rapidly approaching, with the great, shapeless, promiscuous mass of ships and houses rising up on the near horizon right before us. Very indifferent substitutes for wharves are those which serve that purpose in New York—very discreditable, too, to so great an emporium of trade—but such as they are we were very glad to get alongside them at that particular time. Just as the vessel made her last lurch and was elbowing her way into her appointed place, George had left me alone for a few minutes while he went to look after our baggage, and I was beginning to feel rather awkward standing alone at the wheel-end of the quarter-deck, when old Mr. Wortley very opportunely approached and offered me his arm. “We shall be going ashore presently, William!” he said to his son who came up at the moment, “so you can go down for Rebecca now that you have got the baggage together on deck.” Poor William repressed a rising sigh, and with a glance which I well understood, he left us to do his father’s bidding.

"Miss Preston!" said the old gentleman after a short pause, "it will be long before my boy"—he always called him "boy" though he was six or eight-and-twenty at least—"it will be long before my boy forgets this voyage—it will indeed—and as for myself, my dear young lady, I never thought I should live to regret the loss of a Popish daughter-in-law—pardon me, my dear! I only say so in illustration, as it were—I used to think it would break my heart to see a son or daughter of mine wedded to one of that persuasion, but I do assure you, Miss Preston! I have lived to see my error—I should be very, very glad to give William a Popish rib now! I know you have positively refused him—at least the poor boy tells me so—but take a little time, my dear!—only think of it,—think of William's worth—for indeed, indeed, there are few young men like him—think of the independent position you at once secure, and think, too, of how anxious his old father is to have you for a daughter—think of all this, Miss Elinor! and you will not—you cannot hold out!"

"I must, my dear sir—I cannot do otherwise," I spoke with some difficulty, but I tried hard to appear quite composed—"I have told *you*, sir, and what is more, I have told your son, that if he were of my own religion, I should be only too happy to become his wife and your daughter, and to find a sister in your sweet Rebecca, but William is a staunch Protestant, and I am, I thank God for it! as staunch a Papist—as you say yourself—so you see there is a yawning gulf between us, and such being the case, we can come no nearer than we are. Be-

lieve me, my dear good sir ! I regret our separation, perhaps fully as much as you do, but the fault is not mine—in all probability I shall never marry, but if I do, the man of my choice must be a Catholic."

"So this is your final answer?"

"My final answer!—may God bless you and yours—for your sakes, I will ever think kindly of your nation, little as I have hitherto loved the English name. Say nothing more on this subject before my brother, I beg of you, for he is disposed to censure what he calls my bigotry—never, though, was a term more grossly misapplied—I act solely from a sense of duty, convinced that I am doing the will of God!"

The old man had only time to squeeze my hand when George made his appearance and was quickly followed by William and Rebecca. Ever since I had positively declined his generous proposal, young Wortley had kept studiously out of my way, and I respected him all the more for this manly exertion of self-control. Had he been a Catholic, I should have chosen him from a thousand, for I saw him in possession of almost every quality I could have desired in a husband—as it was, I could not help regretting the obstacle which I felt to be insuperable, and I was well pleased that he prudently shunned my company. Lonely as I was it was very tempting to be offered such advantages on the eve of landing in a strange country, but I knew it *was* a temptation, and I prayed for strength to resist it. Strength I accordingly received, and the heart that would otherwise have been torn with anguish at the final parting was so

wonderfully soothed and quieted by some invisible power that I appeared perfectly calm and composed. I have no doubt but the dear trio whose lot I would willingly have shared considered me at last as cold and heartless. Well! be it so—if that wrong estimate of me contributed to lessen their disappointment—to heal *his* heart—why should I regret it? Peace be with them wherever they go, and may no thought of the lone wanderer whom they would have sheltered so fondly ever obtrude itself on their recollection. And yet it will—I know it will! theirs were not the hearts likely to forget those whom they once loved.

When this parting was over all the rest was easy. Hampton was sorry to part with George because the droll fellow had made a great parade of compassionating his infirmities, and was in the habit of condoling with him on the hard necessity which confined him to so poor a regimen.

"Good-bye, Mr. Preston! good-bye!" said he, "I regret that we must part company soon. Should we ever meet again—and I have my doubts about that in my present state of health—I hope to be better able to enjoy life. Were I of a more robust constitution, I should certainly travel northward with you and Miss Elinor, for I have a sort of notion that the bracing northern air would be just the thing to suit me. But of course *now* that is out of the question. I have a sister here in New York who will take good care of the poor invalid. Good-bye, once more, and my best wishes go with you!"

"Confound the good-natured *bosthoon*," said George, with a burst of exuberant mirth, after Hampton was out of hearing; "he looks the very picture of health and strength. I do believe he might face either the polar ice or the tropical sun, without the smallest apprehension. If you only saw that fellow, Elinor! as I have seen him, hard at work at a dish of rare beef-steak, admitting the while that the sea air gave him *something* of an appetite, then you might talk of eating. You wouldn't wonder either at the coat of fat he has on him. But I forgot to tell you that Mrs. White's girl—Margaret I think you call her—is in the next room waiting to see you."

"Waiting to see me! why, I thought she was half way to Boston by this time with her father—you know he met her at the wharf.

"I know he did, but it's pretty clear that they haven't started yet. I'm going out now to try and find our friend Mulligan—he is partner in a large wholesale house in Pearl street. If I find him, he will, of course, show us the city—that is, unless he has lost his good-nature—if so, we must do the best we can!"

When Margaret made her appearance I was perfectly astonished, and her first words were not at all calculated to enlighten me. "You see I have come back to *you*, after all, Miss Preston! an' if you'll only take me with you wherever your goin', I'll not ask a penny of wages, and I'll work for you night an' day."

"Why, Magaret, I don't understand you at all. I

thought you were gone home with your father to Boston!"

"Home!" she repeated, with bitter emphasis, "he has no home for *me*. He has a second wife, it seems, "an' it's what he said to me: 'Maggie! your mother an' you will get along well together,—'my mother, says I, 'why, isn't she dead years ago, to my heavy grief?' —'oh! to be sure, to be sure,' says he, 'but I don't mane *her*, I mane your new mother'—'my *new* mother! and who is *she*?' 'Oh! I see you didn't get the letter I sent you about two years back with an account of my second marriage. I was so lonesome, you see, after I heard of your poor mother's death, that my health itself was getting low enough, so I though I'd get somebody to keep me company, an' see to me if sickness came on. She's a clane, decent girl from near our own place—a daughter of ould Barney Dwyer's. 'So you've put another in *her* place already. An' have you any family?'—'we have,' says he, 'one little fellow about a year old.' 'Well, father!' says I back again, 'I suppose Nancy Dwyer would be well pleased to have me to mind the young one, but I tell you plainly I'd sooner beg my bred from door to door. If I had got the letter you were speakin' of, I'd never have set foot in America. God be with you, father! you may go home and tell Nancy Dwyer that you have good news for her, for I'll never darken *her* door! I'm able and willin' to earn my own bread, an' please God I'll do it!' Well! he tried hard to persuade me to go with him, but it was all no use; so he went off at last, afther givin me this

ten dollar bil., an' God forgive me, miss! but I'm **sure** he was right glad at bottom that I didn't go."

In my heart I could not help sympathizing with the poor motherless girl, although my reason condemned her course. I thought of my own mother, and how I would have felt had my dear father taken another wife but one short year after her death. Still I could not openly approve of what Margaret had done, and I told her I was surprised at a girl of her good sense refusing to go home with her father when he came so far to meet her.

This brought a gush of tears from Margaret's eyes. "Ah then, Miss Preston dear! you woudn't blame me for it, if you only knew what a mother I had—sure there wasn't the likes of her, myself thinks, on Irish ground, an' that's a great word entirely. I'm only just gettin' over my throuble now, an' if I went into the house with the woman that's in *her* place, I'm sure it 'id soon be the death of me. God forgive me if it's a sin, but somehow I haven't the same love or likin' for my father since he told me of it. Won't you take me with you, miss? —ah do!"

"But, my poor girl! what would you do going with me? I shall be, most likely, living in some family as governess, or something of that kind,—however, I may do something for you here—or if not, why you can come with me to Canada and seek your fortune there. Don' cry now Margaret—I will take you up to my bed-room and you can stay there for the present till I see wha ca: be done." Thus consoled, Margaret dried her tears,

and followed me with alacrity up stairs where, to her great satisfaction, I gave her some sewing, and left her with an injunction to be of good heart.

With this additional source of anxiety in my mind, I awaited George's return, which was delayed longer than I had expected by some weary hours. He came at length, and to my very agreeable surprise, was accompanied by Edward Houlahan and another gentleman, in whose embrowned, foreign-looking features I, after a moment's careful scrutiny, recognized a still older acquaintance. The latter was no other than Redmond O'Rourke who had been for years and years my poor father's confidential clerk, though, like my brother, he turned out in the end to have no vocation for the law. Houlahan had been for several years in Mr. Delany's employment, and was still deeply interested in the fortunes of the sole survivor of the family, my friend Mrs. Arthur Dillon. It was whispered in Dublin circles at the time that Edward, had he dared, would have aspired to become the old man's son-in-law, and the memory of that forgotten rumor rushed vividly across my mind as I marked the faint flush on the sallow cheek of the apparently middle-aged man before me while I spoke of Maria, her husband, and the little one for whom I had answered at the font—almost the last thing before I left Ireland. Houlahan, it appeared, was still unmarried, but not so was it with his friend O'Rourke who rejoiced, he said, in the possession of a wife and four children. "Altered times," said he, "Master George, since I used to be gallanting the three Miss O'Sullivans

every Sunday out to Lucan Spa and the Strawberrry Beds. Poor Lucy—*my* flame,—I hear she died of consumption a year or two after I left. Well! those *were* pleasant days after all; and, I must confess, notwithstanding the high value I am at all times disposed to set on Mrs. Redmond O'Rourke and the youngsters—. not to speak of certain dollars and cents which I have succeeded in putting together—I *do* often catch myself humming with undoubted feeling,

“Oh! would I were a boy again!”

You know I was never much given to the sentimental, and on the whole I am well contented just now, but I assure you there are times when memory travels back to the pleasant shades of ancient Cullen’s Wood and sports along the Rathmines road at a deuced smart pace, too, just as this body of mine, now so lank and business worn, used to canter along on my hired pony in the bright summer Sundays “long, long ago” when I was a *yo’soon*, and poor Lucy O’Sullivan a fair-haired little belle in her teens! heigho!—But I say, Master George! —I beg pardon,” he added, correcting himself with something of his former humor,—“I beg pardon, Ensign Preston! you must not think of leaving us, at least for some days. You must see the city, let your military hurry be ever so great.

“As far as two days go, Redmond,” said George with a smile, “we can devote that time to your Empire City. But tell me candidly—you are both half-Amer

beans now—*have* you anything here that will interest us ? For my part, I am inclined to doubt it.”

O'Rourke laughed, and Houlahan pulled up his shirt collar by way of gaining time. “ Ha ! ha ! Master George, you're putting English airs on you already, in virtue of the livery—that is to be. You think we have nothing here worth a look from European eyes, but wait till to-morrow, my fine fellow ! and let our city speak for itself. I want to take you and Miss Preston home now—my old woman will be delighted to have you for guests.” To this we did not immediately consent, but we agreed to pay Mrs. O'Rourke a visit.

“ Your old woman ! ” repeated George, as I left the room to prepare ; “ is your wife, then, approaching the vale of years ? ”

Houlahan laughed, and slapped his friend on the shoulder : “ There now, O'Rourke ! you boast of preserving your Irish phraseology—how do you feel now ? ”

“ Poh ! poh ! ” said O'Rourke, “ that's nothing. No, George, no, she aint much over thirty—she's young enough for that matter—it's only a familiar way we have of mentioning a matrimonial partner in this young country.”

“ Yes ! ” put in his companion, “ men and women are old here as soon as they put their heads in the noose—that's one reason why your humble servant always shirked it, being desirous to keep on the bright side of life as long as possible.”

When we made the acquaintance of Mrs. O'Rourke,

we were so repelled by the listless coldness of her exterior that her very faint invitation, seconding that previously given by her husband, gave us no desire to make her house our home even for two days. We instinctively felt—both of us—that even a hotel was better than the house of a woman like that whose heart and soul were evidently circumscribed by the limits of her own family. No! no! there was no companionship there for me. The woman actually seemed to fear that we *might* possibly consent to trouble her for a day or two—perhaps with that prospect in view, namely, the uncongenial society and entertainment of Redmond's Irish friends for two whole days—she might have put on an extra coat of ice; but whether or not, we civilly declined her “Won't you stay?” excused ourselves to Redmond as well as we could—in confidence be it said that even he was not so pressing as we might have expected;—alas! for the changes that hearts undergo in foreign climes!—and even declined trespassing on his valuable time by accepting his services as *cicerone*. Poor Redmond seemed somewhat hurt, especially when he found that Houlahan was to be our guide, but even that feeling was not expressed with the honest warmth which it would have had in former days, and Redmond left us at the door of our hotel, apparently quite satisfied by our promise to dine with him on the following day.

Houlahan accompanied us up stairs and I could not help remarking to him that I was disappointed in his friend's wife, and even in himself—as far as his recep-

tion of old friends went. Houlahan smiled—"I am afraid, Miss Preston, you would never do for this meridian—that is, you would find yourself wofully misplaced here. That heartiness which was a reality at home—a recognized fact in the social circle, is hardly known here even by name. Society here is, for the most part, a meretricious glitter ; it has in it little of that genial warmth which diffused so pleasant a glow in our little sphere at home : people in these parts are straining might and main to outshine their neighbors—show—show—show—that is the idol before which young and old bow down, and the consequence is that society is hollow and heartless—empty as the prophet's gourd. Money we make here, but happiness and social enjoyment are myths—mere myths—very pleasant to think of, at least for a poor fellow like me who has a dim remembrance of such things—but not to be had for love or money."

"Well," said I, "I am particularly sorry to find Mrs. O'Rourke so very cold, for I have a girl in charge whom I hoped to consign to her care when leaving."

Houlahan inquired what I meant, and I barely told him that the girl was one to whom I had taken a fancy on our passage out. I also told him of her refusing to go home with her father on account of his second marriage,

"By George !" cried Houlahan, "I admire her spirit. I had a step-mother myself once upon a time, and I gave her and my father leg-bail for my honesty one fine morning. It was that very thing that first sent me to

Dublin. I have a good many acquaintances here, and I'll make it my business to speak to some of them—that is, of course, my lady acquaintances—this very evening about your *protégée*. Never fear but we'll find her a good berth."

Houlahar was as good as his word. On the following day I had the satisfaction of seeing my little Margaret very comfortably settled in the domicile of a certain Mrs. Brady, a widow lady with a large family of grown-up sons and daughters, having plenty of means, and the heart to divide them in a measure with those who had none. This was certainly a great load off my mind, and to make me feel still more at ease, one of the young ladies very kindly promised to let me know occasionally how Margaret got on, for the family were quite prepossessed with her appearance, and expected to find her very useful.

With Margaret Gilmartin disappeared the last of my marine acquaintances, and never again did one of them cross my path. They have all fallen back into the dim world of shadows, ay! even the fleshy bulk of Mr. Hampton has dissolved into thin air. Of the Wortleys only the recollection is still vivid, and it seems they have not even partially forgotten me. Rebecca and I kept up for some years a correspondence, which, broken and irregular as it was, still served to fan the flickering flame of memory. After a year or two William went home to England on business for the firm, and, while there, married a young lady whom Rebecca, in her subsequent letters, described as very accomplished

and very amiable, "though no beauty," added my friendly correspondent, "nor even one-half so handsome as one whom we all remember but too well; still she makes a good wife and a kind daughter-in-law—though my father has hardly yet forgiven her for stepping unwittingly into a certain pair of shoes which he had been hopefully keeping for a tiny little pair of Irish feet that are wandering in ghostly guise somewhere in your direction."

But why digress in this unpardonable way to give a partial glimpse of the future, when Mr. Houlahan is actually waiting hat in hand to do the honors of "New York City" to George and myself, a pair of expectants not over eager, for, to say the truth, we were rather incredulous as to the sights of the Empire City.

"Well, well!" said Houlahan, "never mind—I may probably undeceive you before we part—I have a sort of notion that I shall."

When our friend had kindly shown us through the city, and pointed out everything that he thought calculated to interest us, we were agreeably disappointed. Though necessarily wanting in the monuments of art which make the European cities grand and venerable, there is still much to admire in the commercial capital of the United States. Contrasted with Liverpool it is both beautiful and magnificent, although the traveller would hesitate to compare it, in any way, with Paris, London, Dublin, or Edinburgh, each distinctive in their own character. As you walk between the stately rows of brick or brown stone houses in the countless streets

appropriated to private dwellings, you feel that you are in an American city. The abodes of wealth are around you—many of them of almost palatial magnificence; but they want the stamp of antiquity, they are all “bran new”—to use a vulgar Irish phrase—and their newness takes from their grandeur in European eyes. To a native of Dublin, for instance, nothing in New York can make up for the want of public squares planted at intervals through the city, and with all the ground that is to spare in the vicinity, it struck us as singular that the City Fathers have never provided a decent park for the recreation and pastimes of their municipal children.* But no Phœnix Park have they, nor even a Regent's Park. The little triangular grass plot which they facetiously call *the Park*, though prettily planted with trees, and ornamented with a fountain, is neither more nor less than a burlesque on parks in general: it might do for “*the Park*” of an ambitious country town, but for a city like New York it is a mere toy park much like the Swiss villages fabricated for the amusement of children. Neither are the public buildings of New York at all what we might expect—at least I thought so, yet I was agreeably surprised to find over twenty Catholic churches,† few of them, it is true, possessed of

* The reader will see that this was written before the Central Park was commenced. Never more can the traveller reproach New York with the want of a real Park. Few cities can boast or one such as the citizens of New York now possess.

† There are now about thirty churches, together with several religious houses in and around the city.

much architectural beauty, but all valuable as monuments of faith and piety.

"For many of these," said Houlahan, "we may thank the pious liberality of our own people, here as well as at home, fond of erecting temples to the Most High. I assure you their hard earnings are the main support of many a church in our proudest cities."

"Well! whoever put them up," said George, "or whoever worships at their altars, they are highly creditable to them, not, to be sure, for their beauty or magnificence, but for their number!—and that, after all, is the main thing,—the architectural pomp will come with time. But now that we have made the grand round, Houlahan, what are we going to do with ourselves? We do not start for Montreal before six in the evening."

"Oh! I have a few sights to show you yet," said Houlahan, whereupon it was agreed that we should first secure our dinner and then see the remaining lions. Amongst them was the American Museum—Barnum, the great American humbug—the prince of humbugs—unequalled, perhaps, in any age,—the Battery, that woody fringe tacked on to the skirt of Manhattan Island, and the really magnificent view it commands over the bay of New York, its fortified islands, and its endless variety of shipping from the great ocean steamer and the stately first-class packet to the tiny fishing-smack and the miniature steamers which ply the numerous ferries around the vast city. On the whole, we were much pleased, and not a little entertained with what we saw in New York; and although we had discovered but few

of the many friends whom we expected to meet, still our recollections of the Empire City were rather pleasant than otherwise; and as we were facing a country where we knew no one, we both of us bade farewell to our kind friends, Houlahan and O'Rourke, and even O'Rourke's cool little wife, with hearts much depressed. Facing northwards we seemed leaving *our* "known world" behind—we were steering, like Columbus, for regions beyond our ken; and our minds were occupied with many a problem of thrilling interest to ourselves as we steamed up the bold North River—"the mighty Hudson," famed in song,—after waving a last salute to Houlahan and O'Rourke, the two links which had hitherto kept the past before us. With them we again lost sight of Ireland—at least we felt so; and not even the noble features of the country on either side—the wild grandeur of the Hudson Highlands—the fantastic forms of the steep rocks which overhung the stream, nor the fairy beauty of the river itself, reflecting all these objects on its silvery surface, could divert our minds from the dim unknown future about to open before us.



CHAPTER VIII.



HATEVER amusement or pleasure we might have found in the all but matchless scenery of the Hudson, dullness and dejection settled down on us lone wanderers when at Troy we exchanged the cheerful airy deck of one of its best steamers for the dreary pen called a canal-boat,—for those were the days of canal-boats—that safe but most intolerable of all lumbering water-machines. We moderns may turn up our noses at the cumbrous stage-coaches of a by gone day, but what was their tedium to that of the canal-boat? True, it is one of the safest of all conveyances, and many thousands of valuable lives would in all probability have been saved to society within the last few years, had human science never gone beyond them, but still we cannot help admitting that in the present age of the world, travelling by canal is about the same with regard to speed as travelling on ass-back—I beg pardon for the irreverent al-

lusion to that much slandered animal. In fact there are so many points of similarity between the two—dull and heavy, slow and sure, as they both are—that we may not unaptly style the canal-boat the ass of the waters. If ever any human being was sick of weariness it was my poor self during the twenty-four hours, I think it was, that it took us to go from Troy to Whitehall. The country through which we travelled had nothing in it to interest a stranger—we had no society on board—not a soul worth speaking of, and the weather was of that kind that depresses both mind and body—dull, gray, and sultry as weather could be. So there we all sat the live long day on two rows of red cushions, looking at each other, such as we were, across the long table, until I verily believe we could have painted every face of the cabin passengers from the tablets of memory at any given time after our landing. Well for us if they had been even a good-looking company—agreeable pictures for reminiscence, but to the best of my knowledge they were as ill-favored a set of people—as dreary and unsociable, as ever formed parallel lines in the cabin of a canal-packet. Oh! that weary, weary journey—what a leaden hue it wears away back among the varied scenes of my life!

Happily we were soon to have a change. At Whitehall, the bleakest of all bleak villages, we got on board a very trim and tasteful steamer to make the voyage of Lake Champlain, and it was life to find ourselves once more afloat on a broad clear sheet of water with a brisk autumn breeze agitating its surface, the Green Mountains

of Vermont and the far-off Highlands of New York on either side. The scenery on Lake Champlain is very fine, especially as we approach the Canadian frontier, where it begins to narrow in, and its picturesque aspect contributed not a little to dispel the thick clouds of despondency from my mind and the dark misgivings which had begun to haunt me. The rich, many-colored woods, and towering rocks and silvery surface of that lovely lake did more to give us a favorable impression of Canada than any amount of reasoning could have done. A couple of hours ride from St. John's—at the northern extremity of Lake Champlain—brought us to the village of La Prairie, in the most sedate, ambling, quiet railroad-car we ever put foot in—a perfect match for the Troy and Whitehall packet, if ever there was one to be found following in the wake of an iron horse.

Laprairie was certainly a discouraging specimen of a Canadian village—whatever change may have taken place there since, there was no appearance of taste, no order, and no cleanliness to boast of then.

“ Well ! ” said George, with sly meaning, as we traversed the wooden pier leading out to where the ferry-boat lay waiting for us—“ what do you think of this, *ma belle* Elinor ? This village of the prairie makes but a sorry impression or behalf of your *beau Canada*. ”

“ Well ! considering that it is so near the capital, I must own it is somewhat of the shabbiest, but don’t be too ready to judge by appearances—let us wait till we have seen Montreal—that will be a fair test.”

So saying, I seated myself on the side of the boat

facing the north bank of the river, and looked eagerly out for the first appearance of the city which, in all probability, was to be my home in the New World. At length it appeared above the heaving surface of the river, and although it presented a strange and foreign aspect, still the picture was a fine one and it somehow cheered my drooping heart. Stretching apparently for miles along the margin of the great river, lay the fair city of Montreal—the chosen city of Mary—with its tin roofs reflecting the midday sun, and a stately mountain wooded to the summit, rearing its giant bulk behind for great part of the city's length. Gloriously conspicuous about the very centre rose two massive Gothic towers, crenellated and surmounted by graceful minarets at every corner. This my heart told me was a Catholic church—most probably dedicated to the mother of Christians. So uplifted was I at the thought that it was with an anxious heart I asked a gentleman who, by his clerical costume, I judged to be a priest, what that was, pointing to the square Gothic towers.

"That—oh! that is *Notre dame de Montreal*—commonly called here the French Church. It is the parish church of Montreal, and was built by the Seminary of St. Sulpice."

"Thank God!" I fervently exclaimed. The gentleman looked at me and a benevolent smile lit up his dark, sun-bronzed features.

"So, my good young lady! you have a different feeling in regard to yonder towers from that expressed by a minister of some sect who crossing here from the

States just as we are now, and struck by the noble aspect of the parish church, asked like you, what towers those were. On being told he raised his hands and eyes in holy horror, and with a deep groan ejaculated : ‘ Alas ! alas ! the horns of Babylon ! ’ ”

“ Poor man ! ” said my brother, who had now joined us, after exchanging a courteous salute with the clergyman, “ poor man ! I shouldn’t wonder if had a fit of dyspepsy after that—a Catholic city rearing such monuments as those churches to the sky,” pointing as he spoke to the many cross-crowned buildings which we could now distinguish, “ was rather too much for his highly reformed stomach to digest.”

The good priest was much pleased with George’s manner of speaking, and during the short remainder of the voyage he attached himself exclusively to us, inquiring with the kindest interest as to where we came from, and what our prospects were in Canada.

“ Ah ! ” said he, “ I might have known that you were from Ireland—there is a warmth, a simple fervor about the Irish in matters affecting religion which distinguishes them from all others. I must confess I have not often met persons of your stamp coming direct from Ireland—my experience of your people has been chiefly with the lower and more uneducated classes, but even with regard to them, my remark holds good. I am a French Canadian myself, but I must say I have a great respect for Irish Catholics.”

The cordial welcome of this good gentleman when we landed on the wharf—and magnificent wharves Montreal

has, too magnificent for her present commerce—was very encouraging, and when he left us to go to the Seminary, where there is open house at all times for priests, he promised to come and see us at our hotel with one of the clergymen belonging to the city, whom it would be well for us to know.

“Before you go, sir,” said I, “permit me to make one remark. I had always understood that Montreal had no commerce at all commensurate to her fine position, midway, as it were, between the great Lakes and the Gulf. It is an agreeable surprise to me to see such a goodly display of shipping,” and I pointed to the long line of ships, many of them evidently from beyond seas, nearly all with the union jack floating from their yards.

“Ah ! ah !” said the priest, “you must not judge from that—it is September now, Mademoiselle, and we have ‘the fall fleet’ in—at least part of it. There are seasons when we have very little shipping here—before many months go by, there won’t be a sail to be seen at all along the St. Lawrence.” At first I was simple, or forgetful enough to express my amazement, whereupon the good priest laughed heartily, and George laughed too.

“Why, you simple girl,” said he, “have you forgotten that the ice-king keeps his Christmas in these parts, and in very sport enchants the rivers into highways ?”

I was amused at my own forgetfulness, the more so as I had been wont to look forward to the snowy, icy winter of Lower Canada as something new and fresh.

The priest made his bow and retired, and we stepping

into an omnibus, (the only omnibuses used in the Canadian capital are those belonging to the hotels,) were driven to one of the first-class hotels, "for," said George, "*my* hotel-life is ended for the present, and you will, of course, seek some other place of residence as soon as possible, so th. depth, or rather the shallowness of our common purse is of no great consequence." Poor George could never get over his reckless disregard of money. He was made for either of the two arms of the United Service, and nothing else.

A few weeks saw George quite at home in his new profession. It is never hard for a dashing young fellow, such as he was, to get to the heart of a miltry circle—if he be of the right stuff, one meal at the mess-table is quite sufficient to make him one of the family, as it were. In fact, George was very soon the prime favorite of the mess-room, and when he walked the streets in the handsome uniform of the gallant —th, he was the admiration of all that numerous class of young ladies who have a partiality for red coats—especially when there are "bowld sojer boys" in them. He was happy, for such a life exactly suited his disposition, naturally bright, and very much averse to care or application of any kind. As for me, although I could have wished to see him in a quieter and more settled way of life, I had only to reconcile myself to it as well as I could, and I prayed for him—oh, how fervently!—that he might be preserved even as were the three young Hebrews in the fiery furnace, for I could not, or did not conceal from myself, **that he, too, was in a fiery furnace little less dangerous**

than that of the Assyrian tyrant. For myself I was tolerably well situated. Through the kind offices of Mrs. Colonel —— I had obtained a situation as companion to the wife of a superannuated general officer settled in Montreal. The duties of my office were very light—merely to amuse my patroness as I best could, and in my own way, when we were alone, and to assist in the entertainment of company, which was by far the heaviest of my functions, for the dear old lady was never so well pleased as when she had her house full. She was very deaf, and, as is usual wth deaf people, spoke in a loud, harsh voice. Se was, notwithstanding her infirmity, given to “much talking,” but that made my task all the lighter, for I had only to listen, and pay just as much attention as enabled me to retain the thread of her discourse. Of the general we saw but little, for he still held some government office which kept him moving to and fro over the province. When he did pay us a visit, it was very welcome to the entire household from Lady —— down to Martha the housemaid, and Jenny the cook, who had been for years in the family, nay ! Ponto, the old Newfoundland dog, was gladdest of all to see his master, for he, too, had grown old in the service, and had “roamed through many lands” in the suite of the worthy Brigadier. Lady —— always made it a point to celebrate Sir Henry’s arrival by a grand party, though it often happened that she had had one within the week. It was plain to see that the stern old officer took no particular pleasure in these gay assemblies, and he always appeared like a fish out of water. He was

very good-natured, however, and used to say when resigning himself with a sigh to the general commotion excited in the house by the approaching event: "Poor Dorothy! I wish she could devise some other method of welcoming me home!—but parties are *her* life, and always were ever since I knew her, so she can't understand, or never could, that they're a positive bore to an old soldier like me who has been buffeting the world for a good part of a century. Dorothy must have her own way, however,—we're both too old to begin to quarrel now. But oh! Miss Preston, if she'd only let me rest when I come under the shadow of my household gods!"

I, of course, commiserated the good general's distress, especially as I very soon grew weary myself of the continual bustle, and began to long for quiet. Still I could not find it in my heart to leave the kind old lady who was really interested in my welfare, and showed it in a very substantial way, though occasionally I came in for a lecture on my "tiresome melancholy," and for a certain "nasty habit" which Lady — said I had "of falling into *reveries*," or "brown studies," I believe she termed them.

"Have you been crossed in love, my dear? or what's the matter with you that you are always thinking?"

"You forget, my dear madam, that I have lost within a few years my nearest and dearest—"

"Poh, poh! child! is that all—doesn't every one lose their friends and relations some time or another? I've been an orphan myself these many years!"

"I should think you had," thought I, "for half a cen-

tury at least." The thought made me smile, and the smile restored the dowager's good-humour for that time.

Two years passed away pleasantly enough at Lady —'s. Notwithstanding my general aversion to large parties, I began rather to enjoy the great variety of visitors we had, and the equally great diversity of their characters. Among these I particularly relished the unctuous and sweet professors of the word, who with due regard to her soul's welfare, and (of course) a certain consideration for the good things so freely dispensed at her table, availed themselves of many opportunities to share her hospitality, and shout their several systems of theology into her ear in a way that was quite dogmatical. These gentlemen professed a great horror of military society in general, so they were seldom found at any of Lady —'s grand entertainments. They made up for it, however, during the short intervals, and I soon observed that, under one charitable pretence and another, they were no small drain on the old lady's purse.

I had not been long in the house before I discovered that nearly all the clerical visitors belonged to what they called the French Canadian Missionary Society. The ostensible object of this association was the conversion, as they termed it, of the Catholic people of Lower Canada; so I kept my eye on them from the first, and many a hearty laugh George had at their expense, as I carefully treasured every choice *morceau* of their intelligence for his private instruction.

Lady — appeared to take quite an interest in the affairs of the Society, and she was in the habit of boast-

ing to me of the good which her money did in the way of diffusing religious light among the benighted population of the country. I generally answered with a wondering "Indeed!" for I very early found out that argument had not the slightest effect on the good lady's mind. I had told her over and over again of the age-long system of temptation brought to bear on the poor starving Catholics of Western Ireland, with the vain hope of drawing them away from the faith of their fathers. It was no use—she would cram it down my throat that Exeter Hall had done wonders in the way of converting Irish papists, that the latter were "coming forth from Babylon" by hundreds and thousands, and *for that very reason* it was that she encouraged the efforts of the F. C. M. Society. What could I say to such reasoning as this?

I observed all along that the affairs of "the Society" were never brought before the General, and for some time I could by no means understand why his Protestant sympathies should not be worked upon for the greater advancement of the noble object which his spouse and her satellites had in view. For the first few months my presence was no obstacle to the discussion of evangelical matters—a latent hope being entertained, as I afterward found, that "the young lady from Ireland" might be happily "snatched from the burning." Latterly, however, this hope seemed extinguished—in gall, it must have been, for the extinction made the ministers as bitter towards me as such blandly apostolic men ever could be. The worst of it was that I lost all the solemn farces in which they and Lady — were the actors.

One day when the old lady was waiting in the drawing-room for the carriage to be brought out for the afternoon drive, who should make his appearance but Mr. Price, one of the managing men of the F. C. M. Society ; and as neither the lady nor gentleman was aware of my being within hearing—I happened to be in the music-room copying a piece of music which George had borrowed from the band-master of his regiment—the zealous missioner proceeded at once to business.

“ I see your ladyship is just going out,” said the very obsequious big man—for he was a big man—a big, raw-boned man—“ so I must not detain you. Our funds are very low indeed at the present moment, and I have brought you a list, humbly hoping that you will do something for us amongst your friends.”

“ I can’t promise you much from my friends,” said Lady —, in so gruff a tone that I actually started and dropped my pen ; “ they’re not over favorable to your—I mean our society !”

“ Why, how is that, my dear madam ? ”

“ Well, I’ll tell you !—they say, most of them, that it’s a regular humbug to be thrusting the Scriptures down people’s throats whether they will or no. Some of them tell stories of Canadians, who politely received tracts and even testaments, lighting their pipes with the former and throwing the latter into the fire—others selling them for a few coppers if they could get them. So you see I can hardly bring myself to ask money from them for providing books for such purposes.”

“ But there are our schools, my dear lady—think of *their* usefulness ! ”

“ Oh ! for my part I am fully convinced of the Society’s *entire* usefulness, and am quite willing to do what I can myself to forward its views, but the General is so opposed to it, and, as I told you, most of our guests make merry at its expense.” While I was chuckling over this response, I heard a third voice in the drawing-room—it was that of the General, who, like myself, had been an unwitting listener, and now stepped in.

“ Certainly, my dear, and why should they not ? This society has to my knowledge been several years in operation, and has expended vast sums of money on speculation. Where are its fruits ? is Lower Canada more Protestant—less Catholic than it was when these gentlemen started their wind-machine ? I for my part, would be willing to affirm that they have never sent a single soul to heaven——”

“ Oh ! fie, Henry, fie ! ”

“ Fie yourself, Dorothy !—I hope I am as good a Protestant as any of you, but I can’t swallow confounded sham like this. You heard what young Delaval told us yesterday evening of *his* experience among the Canadians.”

“ Certainly I did, Henry, but there is no use repeating it now. The carriage is waiting,—excuse me, Mr. Price ! —another time I shall be happy to see you——”

“ But, my dear madam, permit me to explain to the General——”

“ I too must beg to be excused, my very good sir,

said the bluff old soldier ; " my time is too precious for long-winded harangues on a subject that never *could* interest me. You will oblige me by taking yourself off. Wilson ! " to the servant who answered his ring, " show this reverend gentleman to the door ! "

I suppose Mr. Price found it his wisest course to do as he was bid, for I heard his voice no more ; and after a hearty laugh from the Brigadier, in answer to a remonstrance from his wife, the two vacated the apartment, and I was left to laugh at my leisure over the discomfiture of the unlucky deputation from the F. C. M. Society.

Being anxious to learn all I could of the people among whom my lot was likely to be cast, I took the liberty of asking the General what had been the nature of Delaval's experience among the Canadians. Now Delaval was a gentlemanly young Englishman—a frequent visitor at the General's—who had been sent out on an official Survey by the provincial government.

" Well ! " said the General, " you must know that Deleval is—or rather was—a bit of an evangelical—much given to polemical discussions—I'm not sure indeed but he used to figure occasionally in Exeter Hall ;—however that may be, when he came to Canada, as he says himself in his solemn way, he rejoiced in the opportunity of giving light to the natives in these dark regions, and provided himself accordingly with a goodly stock of Bibles, with any amount of savory tracts cooked expressly for papist digestion. So out he went among the *habitans*, doing business in a twofold capacity, but it

seems when he came to grips—religion grips, of course—with Monsieur Jean Baptiste, he got the worst of the battle—he found, to his great surprise, that Jean knew as much of religion as he did himself—yes! and more too, I fancy, for he says the very children were intimately acquainted with the great truths of Christianity, and, in fact, knew them more thoroughly than he did. After meeting a few rebuffs of this kind, his zeal began to relax, and his evangelical fervor cooled down wonderfully. To make a long story short, as you Irish say, he speedily cleared his trunks of the pious rubbish collected for the conversion of Canada—rather detrimental it was to his fine English clothes, having been the cause of sundry creases in his glossy broadcloths. How he disposed of the lumber is more than I know; but my own private opinion is that the tracts went for lighting cigars, and King James's Bible—God knows how! That was a dead loss to the ranters, for Delaval has opened not his mouth in their favor from that day to this. In fact, he's death on the F. C. M.'s, and all that crew. I think his story had quite an effect on my good wife—I hope so, at least."

The General seldom laughed, but he chuckled gleefully at the *denouement* of his own story, as, taking up a newspaper, he retired to the garden.

It was just about this time that I had another trial to undergo. George's regiment was removed to the West Indies, and, independent of my engagement at Lady —'s, I would have felt extremely awkward to travel with the regiment—a sort of camp-follower. George

had precisely the same idea, and he was also unwilling that I should expose myself without necessity to the dangers of a tropical climate : "Stay where you are, my beloved sister," said he ; "stay, in God's name ! better the keen steady frosts of Canada than the enervating warmth and the deadly miasma of those Indian climes. You are now in a fair way of doing well : you have a good home, and friends powerful to assist you. Stay, then, where you are ; it would be madness, or little less, to follow my poor fortunes. I go to the land of the wild tornado, where the fetid marshes generate pestilence from year to year ;—should I sink, as many Europeans do, beneath the fiery darts of that tropical sun, your lot will be a lonely one. Promise me that if the worst should happen, you will go home to Ireland and tell Alfred, if you ever see him, that George was—not a bad brother, and did not forget his promise——"

I interrupted him somewhat sharply : "I will give you no promise on such a probability ; I hope in the mercy of God that we shall soon meet again. Embitter not our parting, I beseech you, by such gloomy forebodings ; it is bitter enough, God knows ! "

"Well ! well ! we'll say no more about it ; let us talk of something else."

George dined at the General's that last day, and the kind-hearted Brigadier, who had all along taken an interest in him, took occasion, before he left Montreal, to recommend him for early promotion. One solitary comfort I had in this sad separation, and that was that George prepared himself like a Christian for his voyage.

That thought alone has given light and peace to a soul that would otherwise be dark and troubled.

It was a gay sight, and yet a sad one, to see the long column of the ——th moving along the wharf, and over the gangway to the deck of the Quebec steamer, their band playing the well-known parting air, "The Girl I Left Behind Me"—one of those wonderful Irish airs wherein gayety and sadness are so mingled that you cannot tell which affects you most. Who has ever heard that air under such circumstances without emotion? how, then, must I have felt its power when the brother I so loved, my last earthly stay, was moving away at the moment—marching to those very sounds—leaving me perhaps forever! Many a pleasant acquaintance was snapped asunder at the same time, and I was left *alone* in a land of strangers. A mist came before my eyes as I caught George's farewell look, and the last wave of his hand was lost to me; it was seen and answered by the General, who with Lady —— and one or two other friends had accompanied me to the wharf to see the regiment off.

Left thus to myself, and with a heart crushed and bleeding, I could no longer enjoy, as I had done, the fashionable bustle of Lady ——'s mansion. The churches were my sole refuge, and, as much of my spare time was spent within their hallowed walls, I saw many things that passed unnoticed before. It is not without justice that Montreal is called the Rome of America, for surely it is a city of Catholic associations, of Catholic institutions, and, to a great extent, of Catholic morals. From

the great church of Notre Dame and our own St. Patrick's, which occupies one of the noblest sites in the neighborhood, down to the little chapel of Our Lady of the Nativity, situate at one of the extremities of the city in a sweet secluded spot not far from the river edge, there are churches of every size, many of them remarkably fine specimens of art. No city that I know of has so many religious confraternities as Montreal, and on the Sunday within the octave of Corpus Christi, when the entire Catholic population is formed into a procession in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, it is consoling, and at the same time surprising, to see the vast number of persons of both sexes who belong to these associations.

Not to speak of the different confraternities of Our Lady established in the various churches, there are Societies in honor of many of the Saints. First and greatest of these are the St. John the Baptist Society—the national association of the French Canadians—and the St. Patrick's Society, comprising a large number of the Irishmen of the city :—then there are the St. Michael's, the St. Joseph's Society, the Society of *La Bonne Mort*, and the Society of the Holy Family.

I happened to be present, in the parish church, one morning at an early Mass. It was the last Sunday of March, when the entire Society of St Joseph, chiefly young men and boys, sang during the service, with much taste and feeling, several popular hymns appropriate to the occasion ; and never did I hear music with greater pleasure than those sacred melodies sung with such sim-



NOTRE DAME, MONTREAL.

(See page 224.)

ple fervor, and forming so full a choir. What was still more touching was to see all the young men, from the oldest to the youngest, approaching the Holy Communion, and that with the most edifying piety and recollection. Happy are they who thus remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Happy, too, the city, whose young men enroll themselves under the banners of the Saints, for, faithful as they must be to their religious duties, they cannot fail to be good and useful citizens.

On another occasion, when I went to Vespers in the parish church, I was surprised to see a large number of the congregation provided with long wax tapers. While thinking what this might mean, the Vespers were drawing to a close and persons began to move through the aisles, lighting the tapers in the different pews. In a very few minutes the vast church with its two tiers of galleries was twinkling all over with star-like lights, which were kept burning during the Benediction. The spectacle was unique and very beautiful, but it puzzled me no little at the time. I afterwards found that it was the assembly of *La Bonne Mort*, (The Happy Death,) which is held on the third Sunday of every month. Such scenes are only to be met with in Catholic cities, and they make us forget that we live in an age of reason, not of faith.

Then to see the clergy, secular and regular, walking abroad in the habits of their different orders—the Sulpician and the Jesuit, the Oblationist and the Christian Brother—the Congregation nun and the Grey nun, and

the Sister of Charity, appearing here and there in the moving diorama of the crowded streets. All this was, of course, new to me, and it had an indescribable charm for one who, though brought up a Catholic and among Catholics, had never seen such public manifestations of Catholicity. I began to say to myself, like the Apostle on Thabor : "It is good to be here," and I resolved henceforward to consider this favored country my home. "What though I be alone and desolate," said I to myself; "I will endeavor to forget my sorrows in the peaceful joys of religion."

But still I could not help feeling the want of Catholic society. Lady —— was as kind as ever, so was the General when at home, but that was neither often nor long at a time ; there were a few agreeable persons of both sexes among their visitors, but not one of my own creed or country, not one with whom I could speak of home or of religion—at least, *my* religion. My spirits sank from day to day, and I began to sigh for some quiet spot where I might be free from the ceaseless clamor of fashionable society. There was one thing that tended not a little to my increasing dejection. It so happened that Lady ——'s house was situated in St. Antoine street, a fashionable suburb, consisting for the most part of handsome and elegant private dwellings ; a very pleasant locality it was,—but in it was situated the Catholic Cemetery for the whole parish, and many a sight of sorrow daily passed under our windows that persons in other quarters of the city did not see. Now the two great component parts of the Catholic popula-

tion of Montreal are the French Canadians and the Irish, the latter swelled from year to year by the arrival of new emigrants. I had not been long in Lady —'s when I began to notice the funerals as they passed, and I had no great difficulty in distinguishing to which of the two races they belonged. Funerals in general were pretty well attended, but occasionally they furnished pictures of such utter loneliness that it made my heart ache to see them, especially as I all along noticed that the loneliest and most affecting were of the emigrant class—mournful fragments of what has been called the Irish Exodus. Time after time I have sat in the shade of the damask curtains, when some light-hearted visitors were entertaining Lady — with their frivolous chat, and watched through blinding tears these gloomy episodes in the great epic of human life—scenes which others saw not, or heeded not if they saw. At one time it was a solitary figure—a worn-looking man in a costume too familiar to my eyes—following to her foreign grave the wife of his youth—the partner of his life. Again, I have seen the wife, with one or more children, walking close behind the poor-hearse, perhaps the hood of a once decent blue cloak drawn up over the woman's head, as it were to screen her anguish from the observation of the cold, mocking stranger. Once or twice I saw a little family of emigrant children following the corpse of a father or mother—the elder leading the younger by the hand, and occasionally checking by a reproachful look or gesture the childish curiosity of the little ones, who, happily unconscious of their desolate state, would

fain have a look at the fine houses on either hand. All this was sorrowful enough; but there was yet another stage of loneliness in these funeral scenes—it was that of utter and most complete desertion. Many and many a corpse I saw borne to the grave during my stay in that neighborhood, without one human being to shed a tear or breathe a prayer over the departed. Yet this, after all, though deeply touching, was not so painful as the sight of the bereaved husband or wife, or the orphan children left friendless and alone on a foreign shore where they knew no one, or no one knew them. How often did the sympathetic sigh escape me, as I wished from my inmost heart that they had never left their own green isle, where, even if poverty had been their lot, they would at least have had *friends*, that choicest blessing that heaven can bestow on mortals! At home, they would never be altogether destitute—abroad, they often, very often, are.

About a month after George's departure I received a letter from Mr. O'Shaughnessy, giving me all the news; among other items were the following: "Who do you think I met the other day in Grafton street?—now I know you'll be thinking 'what took the old curmudgeon there—gloves and ribbons, eh?'—no, it wasn't, but, as I was saying, who should I meet but Denis John—our old Killarney *hidalgo*, looking as like a first-class grandee as ever you saw him. Maybe I wasn't glad to see him, and to do him justice, he was just as glad to see me. To be sure he asked very kindly for you all, and was sorry to hear that you had left our little island—he's no friend of emigration,

I see plainly. And to be sure I asked very kindly for Miss Ellen. ‘She’s not Miss Ellen now,’ says he, with his princely smile, ‘she has become a matron since you saw her ; she was married last autumn to young O’Donovan, whom you may remember to have seen at Killarney.’ Of course I did remember him—a dashing young fellow he was too—but it never came into my head that he and Miss Ellen were pulling a cord. Neither they were at that time, the Don said, but the acquaintance made in the Lake Hotel came to that in a short time, and though the marriage in which it ended left him lonely, yet he thought Ellen could not have done better, either on the score of blood or fortune. I was glad to hear this, and insisted on the Don’s dining with me that day, that we might drink the health of the young couple in a bottle of Champagne that was innocent of the contamination of cider—sparkling, and bright, and fresh, like the fair daughter of the MacCarthys. The stately old man grew young again as we drained the generous cup to his favorite’s health, and the ice once broken his thoughts flowed free as a mountain rivulet, and he made quite a little speech about you,—wilful little runaway that you are!—and you may be sure, we poured another libation, as Byron says, to your health and happiness. After dinner we adjourned to Dillon’s, and had a right merry evening of it, although our mirth *was* clouded, at times, by the ‘memory of the dead’ and those from whom seas divide us. Bless my heart, Elinor! if I don’t stop, I’ll grow quite soft and sentimental. I have one thing to say, however, before I leave off. How are you getting

on?—I mean yourself, for I heard from George not many weeks ago. He's quite in love with his profession. So far, so good. He tells me you're in a capital situation, but I want to hear from under your own hand how you are settled. It seems you have swaddlers even in Canada—wonder the frost don't kill all such white-livered animals out there. Give me some account of them when you write—manners, habits, general appearance, and so forth. I want to compare your *genus* with ours, though I suppose they are all the same species. The Dillons are about the same as usual. Your god-child is very fat, and quite a precocious little woman—they'll make her out a prodigy, depend upon it. On occasion of my last visit, the old madam communicated to me the gratifying intelligence that 'baby had cut her eye-teeth,' and, as though that was not sufficient to complete my happiness, she further added, 'and, only think, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, she can walk alone, quite across the nursery.' Whether it was this accumulation of good news, or the constituent part of the bill of fare being some degrees better than usual—and you know the Dillon dinners are famous—I certainly dined heartily, and felt exceedingly comfortable all the evening. . . . But now, Elinor, to come back to our affairs—are you well settled—are you contented, or are you not? If not, don't despair; try another situation, and if that doesn't do, come back to the maternal arms of 'the world's Cushla machree.' You know

'Her gates open wide to the poor and the stranger—'

but you are neither, Nell!—friends, and perhaps even a trifle of fortune, await you. If Canadian skies are gloomy for you, come back to your home, for you have one here: so long as the big brass plate on the door in Dominick street bears the name of Terence O'Shaughnessy you're all right, as I told you once before. People are advising me lately to retire on account of a certain asthmatic affection which annoys me now and then; but I won't retire—that's the fact,—as long as I'm able to crawl into Court, I'll still be T. O. S., Attorney-at-Law, for if I weren't that I'd be nothing, and the sexton might prepare me a new house as soon as he pleased. God bless you, Elinor! God bless you—if I never see you again, I love you as a daughter—you needn't laugh now—that's just the plain truth. I never was ass enough to think of you in any other way, though Maria, in her wild days, used to quiz me on the subject. But those days are all past: I think Maria has never been so gay since you left, at least she seldom indulges in merriment. Yet believe me it isn't Arthur's fault—

*For she hath been a happy wife—the lover of her youth
May proudly claim the smile that pays the trial of his truth:
A sense of slight—of loneliness hath never banish'd sleep,
Her life hath been a cloudless one—then wherefore doth she weep?

Mind, *I* didn't say she wept—Haynes Bayley might have had her in his eye for all I know, when he wrote those lines; but if Maria doesn't weep, she certainly looks sober—old madam's doings, I'll be bound. The old hare! if it was she that carried off or squeezed out

Maria's piquant drollery, I could find it in my heart to leave her standing for a night in solitary grandeur a-top of Nelson's pillar. But, nothing of this, mind ! when you write to Maria. Farewell ! once more—by-the-bye ! give my compliments to that old Brigadier of whom George speaks ; tell him if ever he comes to Dublin, to be sure and pay old Shaugh a visit—if I'm a living man, he'll be sure of as good a dinner, wine included—as he'll get from this to himself—I've a notion that hearts are trump when he turns up. As for his rib, I fancy she's a *spare* one : tell her if she'd only leave off her swaddling propensities, she'd be welcome as the flowers in May, for I think, from what George says, she has treated you rather kindly. There now—I protest I'll not write another word—yes, I will—Ally, my old housekeeper, sends her love and best respects to you and Master George. She bids me tell you that she says the beads for you once a week. Let us know did you ever see or hear anything of Larry and his yoke-fellow. Adieu."

I gave my old friend's characteristic invitation verbatim to the General, who received it very kindly : "Upon my honor, Miss Preston, if ever I do visit the Emerald Isle, which is not at all beyond the range of probability, I'll certainly avail myself of your friend's very kind invitation. I've an idea that he's a brick—pardon the vulgarism, but I can find no word better adapted to convey my conception of old Shaugh, as he pleasantly calls himself!"

I then ventured to repeat that portion of the message

which related to her ladyship, at which the General laughed heartily. "Well, really now, that's good—capital, I should say. Swaddling propensities!—that's just the word, but it wouldn't do to tell her so, for she'd never forgive jolly old Shaugh—never, in the world. *I* know the canters—I do—charity is always on their lips, but confoundedly seldom in their hearts—they're the bitterest crew living. But, I say, Miss Preston! have you heard from George lately? He'll be bringing you a Creole sister some of these days. He'll captivate an heiress, or I'm much mistaken. What would you think of that?"

"I have not the slightest objection, sir, provided he secures his own happiness. I'm pretty certain that George will never marry for money alone!"

"I should hope not; indeed!" said the General, very seriously; "marry for love and work for riches, as the old proverb has it; that's what we did! eh, Dorothy?" to Lady D——, who just then entered.

"What did you say, Henry?"

I say we married for love, not for riches, my dear," raising his voice; then to me in an under tone, "That's true enough, Miss Preston! and notwithstanding her swaddling propensities, as Shaugh says, I have never had cause to repent *my* choice: even the canters haven't been able to spoil Dorothy." I loved the good old man at the moment for the affectionate pride with which his eye rested on his aged wife. She had not caught the full meaning of his words, but she well understood the accompanying glance, and to it she replied: "Yes, to be sure,

we married for love ; and I'm proud to say our marriage has been a happy one, excepting the loss of our children ; but love supported us even through that. I'd be dead and in my grave years ago, Miss Preston, my dear ! if it hadn't been for that hard-featured, grey-headed old man. He's not so hard as he looks, I can tell you."

"Upon my word, Dorothy, you're very complimentary as regards my outward man. But never mind, I won't retort. We've got an invitation to Ireland, my dear ! "

"An invitation to where ?"

"To Ireland !" He then told as much as he chose of what O'Shaughnessy had said. She seemed rather pleased, and smiled very graciously.

"Well ! now, do you know, I should like very much to see something of Ireland, if I ever went home to England. I have a great desire to visit the Lord's vineyard at—what's that place in Connaught——"

"Achill !" I suggested, in my loudest voice.

"Exactly ! I have heard so much of the wonderful regeneration effected in that neighborhood by the word of God, that I should like of all things to see it. It appears there have been thousands converted from Romanism in that locality alone."

"I am sorry to contradict your ladyship," I said, "but it is my duty to do it notwithstanding. The accounts which you have seen are those returned to their patrons and employers by the agents of the Church Missionary Society. In justice to the poor people whose faith they were commissioned to buy up, I must candidly inform

you that their statements are *wholly* unfounded. Not only have we the testimony of the Catholic hierarchy and priesthood to that effect, but even that of Protestant visitors who penetrated to those remote regions for the express purpose of investigating the matter. It is latterly pretty generally understood that what your ladyship calls the wonderful regeneration of the Achill islanders is a pure fiction."

"So the golden bullets of Exeter Hall have *not* annihilated Popery after all," observed Sir Henry, with his dry, inward laugh; "what a tough hide that monster must have—excuse me, Miss Preston! I do but borrow the language of the conventicle."

"Nonsense, Elinor," screamed her ladyship, "there is no sort of use in denying the fact that the gospel is making rapid strides in Ireland."

"I do not *mean* to deny it, Lady —. The gospel *is* making, and has made such rapid strides that it rules and animates the entire country. In fact, it has done so for over fourteen centuries. St. Patrick himself gave the Gospel to the people; and if they haven't taken good care of it since, no people ever did."

The Brigadier laughed at this unexpected turn, but Lady — waxed somewhat angry.

"Pshaw, Elinor, I don't mean *that* form of Christianity which has hitherto prevailed in Ireland—it is next to none."

I acknowledged the compliment by a bow, and was preparing my verbal thanks, when a loud ring of the door-bell echoed through the house, and immediately a

servant entered with a handful of letters. This exciting incident sent the conversion of Ireland to Jericho, or any other remote station, for the time being; and it so happened that the subject was never again brought up for discussion during my remaining stay in that house.

My share of the package was a letter from George written in very good spirits, and one from Rebecca Wortley, announcing her approaching marriage. This was all very satisfactory, and furnished me with a fresh stock of cheerfulness, which Lady — persisted in ascribing to certain "good news from home" of a particular nature, as she emphatically said. In fact, she went so far as to hint her conviction that I had still a *tender* connection with my native land. Unfortunately she did not confine this notion to her own mind, but was pleased to communicate it rather freely to her visitors, to the great discouragement of two individuals who had been saying soft things to me for some time past, when opportunity served. One of these was an antiquated beau who, if he had not "walk'd the world for fourscore year," had at least been half a century on its stage in one capacity and another. Like the Nabob in the song,

"His guineas were yellow, but so were his cheeks," and there was, moreover, a look of jaundiced melancholy about him that was anything but prepossessing. The other admirer was a dandified young gentleman, some two or three years younger than myself—one of those creatures who haunt ball-rooms and other such places of public amusement, doing the amiable to ladies

in general and to rank and what *they* consider fashion in particular. This rare specimen sported quite a stylish *imperial*, dressed in the most approved style, and affected a most supercilious tone towards those whom he judged below the mark. However it happened that Lady —'s humble companion found favor in such fastidious eyes, I am not prepared to say; but such was actually the case, and notwithstanding the extra coldness with which I made it a point to treat him, he still hung on, doing everything he could to make himself agreeable, and producing an effect diametrically opposite to what he intended. Neither of these two gentlemen had ever "declared his intentions"—as speculating mammas are wont to say—so that I had no chance of ridding myself of their very disagreeable attentions. But all at once came Lady —'s broad inuendo—I really believe she meant it for the very purpose—and quick as lightning dropped off my junior admirer! The senior held out a week or so longer, and might actually have ventured to inquire whether the Irish affair was or was not an obstacle, but luckily for me somebody told him that I had said he wore a wig; it was a fur fabrication, to be sure, but it served me well, for after that my old beau could never look me straight in the face. His sweeteness, as regarded me, was thenceforward turned into gall and wormwood.

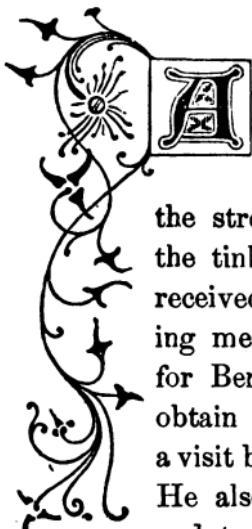
Lady —, just as I supposed, called on me for a large measure of gratitude, which I certainly was quite willing to render, notwithstanding the circuitous route by which she had effected my deliverance. "I don't

know," said she "whether there's any Ulysses in the case, but you were certainly besieged as close as ever Penelope was. It takes me to make a clear riddance."

I, of course, expressed my obligation, and with a smile which I felt to be melancholy, assured her ladyship that she had no secret to learn with regard to me.



CHAPTER IX.



BOUT six or eight weeks after, when the winter had just set in, and the streets were musical all day long with the tinkling of the "merry sleigh bells," I received another letter from George, informing me that his regiment was under orders for Bengal, but that he would, if possible, obtain leave of absence in order to pay me a visit before he left the western hemisphere. He also hinted that he had formed a new and tender tie in Jamaica. "The daughter of a wealthy planter," said he, "the dearest and loveliest of her sex, has deigned to take an especial interest in my welfare—her father, who is of Spanish descent, appears as though he would have no objection to Elmira's choosing an Irish Catholic for a husband—in fact, I have *smoked* myself into his good graces, as I *sang* myself into his charming daughter's—what do you think of that, Elinor?—I know you never gave me credit for much vocal talent, but you see tastes are different, as I have

found—to my profit. So do not be surprised, should I bring a sweet Creole bride to visit you and Canada—both of which Elmira longs to see—you especially. You will love her, I know, and she will love you, for you can appreciate each other. Farewell, then, for the present, my dearest sister—when we meet again it will be in joy—mingled alas! with sorrow, for the long separation that is to follow. I will write to you again when all is decided."

While I was looking out with strangely mingled feelings for the promised letter—it came—it was on Christmas Eve, I well remember—it was directed in a small feminine hand, and—bore a black seal. It was from the Signora Elmira Mendez letting me know that my brother had taken a violent fever a few days after writing to me, and was carried off inside of a fortnight. Few and short were the words of this mournful letter—evidently dictated by a breaking heart—the only reference the writer made to herself was a touching admission that she had loved George Preston with more than a sister's love—"though I know," she added, "you will hardly believe that possible. But no matter which of us loved him most—he loved us both—he was good, and high-hearted, and generous, and God has taken him from us. Thank our good God with me, dearest Signora, that our *loved* is not *lost*—he died full of faith, hope, and charity, fortified with all the helps of religion. He, let us trust, is gone to a better world, but who can console you—who can console me?—only God alone, and our common Mother—to their tenderest protection

I commend you, my more than sister! Need I tell you on what noble brow the inclosed curl was wont to rest? Your own heart will tell you. Write to me, I beseech you, as soon as you are able! Would that we were together to lighten each other's burden!"

Thus then was my last prop taken away. For some hours after the receipt of that letter, I was so stunned that Lady —, as she afterwards told me, feared my senses were gone for ever. But no—I recovered gradually as from a dream—recovered to the full consciousness of my loss. Then it was that I bitterly repented my leaving Ireland, and in the first paroxysm of my sorrow I determined to go home again. "Here I have no one," thought I, "to mourn with me—I will go home to Emily and Alfred. I cannot bear this loneliness of sorrow!"

My next thought was one of real consolation. I remembered Emily's words: "You have a host of friends in heaven." In pursuance of this happy suggestion I brought my sorrows to our Lady's feet in her shrine of *Bons Secours*, a quaint-looking old chapel dating from the earliest settlement of the French on the island of Montreal. There in the silence of the holy house I poured out my soul in prayer for the repose of the beloved dead, and that I might receive that strength and succor of which I stood in need, I invoked Our Lady of Succor, and besought her powerful assistance. My prayer was heard—the crushing weight was suddenly removed from off my heart, and I could look my prospects in the face. After all they were little changed,

but I had somehow conceived a desire for change, influenced in part by the fearful blow which had made me sick of foreign climes, and stranger-friends, if one may be allowed the term.

To Ireland, then, I had made up my mind to go, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of my good, well-meaning patroness, and I had just communicated my intention to the young Signora Mendez, when a letter arrived from Mrs. Arthur Dillon which again changed my plans, though why it did so I can hardly tell. Among other news of far less serious import to me, Maria—evidently trying to write cheerfully when her heart was sad and heavy—informed me that poor O'Shaughnessy had departed this life some three days before the date of her letter. “I can hardly tell you, Nelly, how much we miss him even now,” she went on, “what then will it be when the various occasions come round (in the natural course of time) which used to draw out his many endearing qualities. Upon my word, Nell! I cannot write without shedding tears, and even Mamma Dillon has her eyes ‘like two burnt holes in a blanket’ with the fair dint of crying. As for you and George, you have good reason to cry too, for you have both of you lost a warm and steadfast friend. During his last illness—it was not very long—at least from the time he took to his bed—only eight or nine days—he often spoke of you, and the very day before his death, he told me to tell you that your promised home in Dominick street was no longer there—‘tell her,’ said he, ‘that it’s gone with old Shaugh to the other

world. As I can't welcome her here, I'll give her a hearty welcome there, if I'm so lucky as to meet her. Tell George to be a good boy and take care of Elinor—by the bye! I had a queer enough dream about him last night. I thought he came in with the brass label of my door in his hand, and another with his own name on it, and told me we were going into partnership. I hope there's nothing wrong with the poor fellow. I don't mind dreams, you know, but somehow I can't help thinking of this one.' Dear old man, his end was peaceful and happy, just as it ought to be, and he left his love and blessing for George and you. Alfred came to see him a few days before his death. He is buried close to your father in Glasnevin, and his nephew, who is supposed to inherit the bulk of his fortune, intends to erect a handsome monument over him." Maria kindly inquired whether there was any chance of my going home again, but I had now as little desire to go back to Ireland as though I had neither sister nor brother there. "I suppose," said I to myself, with a strange feeling of bitterness, "if I did make up my mind to go home, I should hear on my arrival, or perhaps before, that I had neither one nor the other left—death seems to have our utter extermination in view—I will not buoy myself up with the hope of seeing Alfred or Emily, and it may be that death will spare them. It is something to know that I have them still in life, and to feel that there are yet two hearts in this world to share in my feelings, to mourn and to rejoice with me. I will remain in Canada,

but not in Montreal—I am sick of city-life, and must have quiet, at any cost."

Such was the state of my mind when, to my great and pleasing surprise, I received a letter from the worthy Canadian priest who had crossed the river with George and me on our arrival in Canada. The object of his letter was to ask whether I could recommend to him a young lady capable of teaching both French and English. He had tried advertising, he said, and had had sundry applications, but none of the applicants seemed to suit—some were more or less incompetent and others were so extravagantly high in their expectations that it was no use to think of engaging them for a country school in a remote parish. "True," said he, "the locality is a pleasant one. We are right on the St. Lawrence in the midst of a smiling country. We have quite a pretty little village, too, and a very good church. Our school-house is passable enough, but what of all this when we are all quiet country-folks, have no *society* fit for "highly-educated young ladies," and worst of all, are full fifty or sixty miles from your great centre of civilization. Still I thought that you might be acquainted with some young lady of very moderate expectations who would not altogether despise our poor place. It would be easy for me to find a French teacher, but many of our villagers are anxious to have their children learn English, and our Seigneur's wife positively insists that the new teacher must both speak and teach English well, as she has a family of daughters who must know that language let their own do as it may. If you can do anything for

me in this matter, my good young friend, you will oblige

Your respectful friend and well-wisher,

LE COMTE, prêtre,
Curé de St. —

As I read this letter my heart swelled with gratitude, for in it I recognised the answer to my fervent prayer addressed before her shrine to Our Lady of Bons Secours. "A thousand thanks, most dear mother," I exclaimed aloud in the fulness of my heart—to St. —. I will go—there at least may I hope for peace, as far as retirement can give it—there will I merge the past in the present, and in the daily discharge of my humble duties, endeavour to sanctify my soul in preparation for the final hour that will restore me to those I have lost. There, unknowing and unknown, I can glide through the remnant of my life—it may be short, it may be long, but it cannot be feverish in a place like that, where the busy world is shut out, and peace, like the halcyon, sits and broods forever.

The preliminaries were not hard to arrange, the friendly reluctance of Lady — to let me go being my greatest obstacle. But even that I managed to surmount, and as soon as the navigation opened, I went to St. — with the full determination of making it my permanent home, if such were the will of God.

* * * * *

Four tranquil years have rolled away since I settled

drown in this quiet nook, and yet I only begin now to feel myself at home. It is true I found *peace* here from the very first—indeed I could not choose but find it, for it pervades the very atmosphere. Stir or bustle of any kind there is none : even the few store-keepers who supply the simple necessaries of village life go through their business in a quiet, mechanical sort of way that seems strange (at first) to one who has all her life been accustomed to the professional alacrity and dapper civility of first-class metropolitan houses. As for society, I might as well have been in the centre of the Great African Desert—with the single exception of the good priest and mademoiselle his sister, a lady who calls herself thirty, but appears as though she dropt some ten or fifteen years somewhere in the calculation. She is very hospitable, however, and very pious, and alas ! very silent—which latter qualification is by no means common amongst her countrywomen, who will chatter away for hours together on subjects of little importance to any but themselves, their tongues rattling on in such a shrill, voluble way, and with so much rapidity that strangers find it hard to understand them, at least until they are accustomed to their peculiar intonation.

For some time, indeed a long time, I felt very lonely in my new position, utterly isolated as I was amongst a people with whom I had little in common ; but gradually that feeling wore away, and I began to relish the soothing stillness of all around. The very trees were at first strange to me, and it was not till my second summer in St. —— that I could feel satisfied to have my

home shaded with the tamarac, the maple, and the dark Canadian pine, instead of the familiar oak and ash and the broad-leaved, graceful sycamore. The birds that people their branches, too, are not the tuneful songsters of my own dear native land—they are gay and gaudy in their plumage, but there is no music in their voice.

“—no warblings sweet from their throats arise,
Like the wood-notes wild of my native skies.”

At early morning or late evening when I walk abroad, I miss the warble of the linnet and the thrush, and the musical whistle of the blackbird. Even the “corn-creak” of the meadows—that most inharmonious of birds—would be thrice welcome to me; for the bull-frog who generally sings out “the parting day” in Canadian lowlands, though there is certainly some similarity in their tones, cannot possibly serve as a substitute. But most of all the winged choristers of the air, I missed and do still miss the gentle cuckoo, the herald of the spring, whom some one happily calls “the hand-maid of the opening year.” Of old we used to vie with each other as to who should first hear the cuckoo’s note, but now I hear it not at all—even that is with the past—one of childhood’s sounds, destined to linger in the darkened heart so long as it has a pulse.

Be our lot ever so happy in the land of our adoption, still it can never be to us like the land of our birth, where the days of our youth lie smiling behind us, in their spring time freshness—where every scene around

our childhood's home is a precious picture hung up within that picture-gallery of the mind, commonly called memory. Yet other and more tender ties there are to bind us to our native land :

“The grass that springs on our fathers’ graves,
Full many a thought endears,—
There’s a spell in the humblest shrub that waves
Near the home of our infant years.
Yea, the simplest leaf doth our fondness share
If its parent bud expanded there.

“Oh thus!—tho’ far on a foreign strand
My lonely lot is cast;—
Still, still for thee, my Fatherland!
The pulse of my heart beats fast;
While many a vision, soft and bland,
Bears me back to thy shores, my Fatherland!”*

Soon, however, I became attached to my pretty rural home. I got an old Canadian woman and her daughter to keep my little house and the adjoining school-room in order. As for the cooking, I generally did that myself—it was little I required, but even that little I wished to have done in my own way, and, for the first time in my life, I got up to my elbows in flour occasionally, to the great discomfort of old Marie, who insisted that her bread was of prime quality. It might have been, for all I know, but to my taste it was rather dark in color and had a habitual tendency to the acid which my palate could never relish. When I first began my culinary experiments, the old woman used to get quite ruffled at

* Capt. T. C. Smith, 27th Regiment.

my obstinate perseverance in what appeared to her, new fangled plans. It was no uncommon thing for her to lecture me well and soundly.

"I tell you, Ma'amselle, that's not the way to make bread!"

"Well! never mind, Marie, let us try, at any rate: I can only spoil it, you know!"

"Nonsense! you just know as much about making bread as that cat by the fire;—it's a sin to spoil good flour!"

Great was her surprise, and, indeed, my own, when my bread turned out not only eatable, but tolerably good.

With regard to the soup I had still greater difficulty,—in fact I never *could* succeed in persuading my old duenna that beef or mutton made better soup than pork which she prized in proportion to its depth of fat, for that and all other purposes. No one can tell her mortification, when after displaying all her culinary skill in preparing a mess of this kind, with the tempting addition of red beans,—partly, I suppose, for color, partly for flavor,—I left the sole enjoyment of it to herself and Laure, her pretty daughter. Her muttered comments on my singularity of taste were anything but complimentary. Poor old body! she is truly faithful, but requires as much humorizing as a petted child. Still, on the whole, she and I get along well together. Notwithstanding my fancied inferiority in the culinary art, she shares the common feeling of the villagers in regard to my great learning and so forth; and I believe Ma'am

Longré is not a little proud of being my Grand Vizier. I am teaching Laure both French and English, permitting her to take her place regularly in the school-classes, and that has won for me the old woman's heart. It is true Laure makes but a poor offer at the English, but to hear her attempt reading it is both joy and pride to her mother's simple heart.

My school consists of about fifty girls, some of them almost "women grown," while others are barely able to toddle along with the help of an older sister's hand. As I sit in the midst of them, painfully striving to fix the letters of the alphabet in the minds of some, drilling the others in the art of spelling, and witnessing on all sides the cruel torture of my own language, writhing in the mouths of those to whom it is new, and strange, and uncouth—sometimes sending one "juvenile" or another out to the kitchen to wash her hands before she can commence her lesson, I ask myself: "Am I indeed Elinor Preston?—have I known life in its higher and more polished circles?—was this the aspect which the future wore when in youthful dreams I saw it?" What wonder if I doubt my own identity.

When at twelve o'clock the forenoon school was dismissed, and I took my seat at my lonely board, with one solitary plate and one dish before me, I felt pretty much as Robinson Crusoe must have done before his solitude was broken by the company of his man Friday. As memory glanced over the gay and sparkling *réunions* of former years—the elegantly and plenteously-spread table to which I had all my life long been accustomed,

and the loved companions who would have made even poverty cheerful—ah! the change was very, very striking, and many a time, during the first month, I would leave my meal untasted, to the grievous disappointment of poor Marie, and walk abroad in the forest till the hand-bell, rung by the eldest girl, summoned me back to my weary post.

Seated once more at my little desk, flanked on one side with a pile of blotted copy-books and one of slates on the other, my wayward imagination would soar over mountain, sea, and river to the busy haunts of men. Again, the noise of a great city was in my ear, its cries, its bustle, its confusion: every sound, even to the grinding music of the street-organ—all were there, mingling oddly enough with the monotonous hum of young voices near me, as the children prepared their afternoon lessons. Ever as I wrote the head-lines and set the sums, would that restless faculty before-mentioned amuse itself with sketching by-gone scenes, summoning the very dead from their graves to play their parts over again in the recesses of my brain. Aunt Kate was there, with her harmless pride of lineage—how she would have looked had she seen me at my task!—my mother, with her calm, intellectual countenance wearing a pensive smile—my father's hearty, cheerful laugh echoed through the sorrow-stilled heart—Carry and George were there, in their life-hues warm and bright; and Alfred and Emily, with their chastened look of love. There, too, was old Shaugh, merry and light-hearted as ever—and there, too, were figures which will hold their place on the world's

stage as long as history lasts. O'Connell and Sheil, and honest Tom Steele, and many another public character passed again before my mind, until I was almost bewildered with the crowd of ghostly phantoms.

"What you call dat word, Ma'amselle?"

At the sound of the little childish voice, striving hard to get out so much English, off in a troop went the shadowy visitors from the past, yea! even the Liberator himself—the mighty Atlas who carried all Ireland on his shoulders—and back I came to the full consciousness of the present—its dry, unvarying, monotonous details were all before me, staring me full in the face.

Few are the incidents of these four years. In general, the days have flown by, "uncounted in their flight," bearing such a family likeness to each other that there was no distinguishing them when they were once past. Going down to the presbytery to tea, or being driven over by Mademoiselle Le Comte to the manor-house—which was, indeed, nothing more than a respectable farm-house—to spend the evening, these were notable occurrences, though they took place, perhaps on an average, once a week. Weddings and christenings were, after all, the great "foot-marks of time"—for I was, in this regard, public property, and could no more think of refusing such an invitation than I would of going by telegraph to Montreal. There was no merry-making complete without *ma'amselle*, and nothing could exceed the easy, graceful deference with which the villagers treated me when among them. Those who have never lived among the *habitans* of Lower Canada can form no idea

of that natural, unsophisticated politeness which distinguishes them from all the peasantry I have ever seen. There is a suavity, even a refinement in their manners, which makes their society very pleasant.* I soon began, accordingly, to reckon events from "Ma'am Dubois' christening," or "Auguste Lacroix's wedding," and it used to amuse me no little to find myself making up a calendar out of the domestic history of my neighbors.

My rarest enjoyment, however, was in the society of the good vicar, who alone, of all my present associates, knew anything whatever of Ireland. True, his knowledge of that most neglected country was not very extensive, but he was really anxious to know something more of it, and the few Irish books which I had with me were a source of real pleasure to him. Having read these over, the good man began to think himself quite master of the subject, and it was amusing to hear him floundering away in the troubled waters of Irish affairs for the special enlightenment of his friend, Monsieur Garneau, our Seigneur, whose head was somewhat of the thickest, and who took about as much interest in the subject as the pipe he habitually smoked.

"How is it, sir," I one day asked the vicar, "that even the educated among your people take so little interest in the history of Ireland? They seem to ignore my poor country altogether, wholly overlooking the fact

* In the towns and cities this natural refinement is in a great measure worn off by the rude contact of rowdies and loafers of every origin. It is only in the country you will see Jean Baptiste in his normal state; theft and many other city vices being there wholly unknown.

that she is one of the oldest Christian nations—perhaps the very oldest—of Western Europe, and has more Christian antiquities to show than any other country in the world for her size. Has she not been fighting the battle of Christianity in peace and in war, since it was first planted on her soil over fourteen centuries ago?"

The priest shrugged his shoulders—admitted Ireland's claims, but could not account for her being so little known or talked of among his people.

"Is it because she is unfortunate and reduced in circumstances?" I went on; "if so, the Catholic nations who neglected her shall have their neglect to answer for. If Ireland be poor and powerless to-day, it is because of her fidelity to God and His Church;—had she yielded to either threats or persuasions—to torture and persecution or wily promises, she would be now and long ago the petted darling of the British Empire instead of what she is,—the hardly-used step-child of a Protestant government—the 'Niobe of nations,' as she has been aptly styled."

Mr. Le Comte smiled at my warmth, but his Catholic heart felt the justice of what I said; and he applied himself more than ever to the study of Irish history and Irish hagiology. It was a real pleasure to me to encourage the good pastor in this new pursuit, by verbal descriptions of such of our ecclesiastical remains as I had myself seen. He has not yet attained any proficiency in English conversation—and what is more—I fear he never will. It is in French, therefore, that I am obliged

to describe the places I have seen; and my descriptions, though highly interesting to *Monsieur le Curé*, are, I fear, tiresome enough to poor "Ma'mselle," who tries hard to keep up appearances in the way of listening, till her simple mind is fairly overtired, and she will put some ludicrously-irrelevant question in the midst of some highly-colored account of a baronial castle or a stately abbey. Thus I have known her to raise her eyes suddenly from her sewing or knitting, after listening attentively—at least to all appearance—while I told of the princely chieftains who of old fought for their country and their faith,—the O'Neills, perhaps, or O'Donnells—and ask, with much earnestness, *whether I had noticed that new breed of hens in Madame Garneau's farm-yard*. Not at all disconcerted by her brother's hearty laugh, or my subdued smile, the good lady would go on to descant on the peculiar properties of the new importation, in a way that would secure her a place in a Natural History Society, had there been such a thing in our village.

The calm current of our daily life was but seldom ruffled by any remarkable incident. Lady — had kindly sent me, a few weeks after my arrival in the village, a choice collection of books, containing many approved Catholic works, together with sundry volumes of good poetry, a set of Shakspeare, a Douay Bible, and the Pilgrim's Progress. Poor John Bunyan! worse even than thine own Giant Despair would have been to thee the company of that *unholy book* on which King Jamie never smiled—the knowledge of such a freight being

on board, would have plunged thee forthwith in the Slough of Despond! Happily John's *Pilgrim* was not so sensitive,—like a staid, sober man, as a pilgrim ought to be, he kept his opinion of the Rhemish fathers to himself, and kept the peace with their obnoxious book during the entire voyage, to the great comfort and edification of their ungodly travelling companions, Will Shakspeare, Tom Moore, and divers other mirth-loving and mirth-moving book-men. Need I say how welcome this goodly company was to me in my all but solitude,—the Pilgrim was, of course, an exception. Well for me that the kind donor never thought of asking what I did with poor Bunyan. In confidence be it told that I made an *auto da fé* of him, having no mind to cumber my shelves with such pharisaical rant.

I was sitting one evening in early summer, just within the open door of my school-room, reading a volume of Fleury's Ecclesiastical History. I had taken refuge there from a certain house-cleaning fit which had all day long kept Mother Longpré and her daughter on the stretch, and left me not a spot whereon to rest. After a while the book dropped from my hand, and, dreaming of the past, I fell into a gentle slumber. All at once I was roused by an approaching footstep, and looking up, I perceived a stranger in the act of crossing the threshold. He was a short, thick-set man, well clothed with fat, and over that a rusty black suit which must have originally encased some notable preacher of the word. A broad neck-tie enveloped his throat, and in its folds repesed a very fleshy chin, surmounted by a large, coarse

mouth, which with a pair of full round eyes, projecting considerably from their sockets, gave quite a sensual cast to the dull countenance. There was a brisk, business air about the man's whole figure that contrasted very oddly with his clerical garments. Nodding to me with a "Fine evening, miss!" he passed on to the centre of the room, and there deposited on the table a bulky parcel which he had hitherto carried under his right arm. He next proceeded to take off his hat, (which I observed was crammed with printed papers,) laid it on the table beside his parcel, and very leisurely established his own cumbrous body on a neighboring chair. He then honored me with his attention, and I suppose the man's assurance brought a rush of the old Preston blood to my face.

"May I ask what it is that brings you here, sir?" I at length asked. The visitor answered in tolerably good English.

"I come on the part of him who sent Paul to preach to the Gentiles."

"Oh, indeed! and for what purpose, pray?"

"To give you that which is beyond all earthly treasure—yea, young woman! even the saving knowledge of the truth which is in Him!" and he turned up the whites of his eyes with a very pious air, indeed. I had often heard from my old woman and others of the villagers how certain religious *colporteurs* paid them a visit at times, but never till now had I seen one of the tribe in his proper person. I was rather pleased to see such a moral curiosity, and in order to draw him out, I very

demurely thanked him for his good intentions, whereupon he was mightily encouraged, and taking a small Bible from his bundle he presented it to me with a smile which he meant to be very gracious. But my Gentile hand was not forthcoming to receive the gift, and the man of grace opened his eyes very wide indeed.

"Will not my sister receive the word of God,—yea, even the Book of books?"

"No, thank you, I have a Bible already—one is quite sufficient."

He was evidently taken aback, but quickly recovered himself on a new tack: "Oh! Ma'amselle has already seen the light—I thought there was a precious germ of grace within—within" he was evidently casting about for a compliment, "within that—"

"My good friend," said I, cutting him very short, "if *you* have no other business with me, you will oblige me by retiring, as *I* have other matters to attend to."

"Alas!" he sighed, or rather groaned, "this is the business of life—the one thing necessary!"

"What is, may I ask?" Wholly unprepared for this cross-questioning, my pious visitor began to wax what is vulgarly called fidgety.

"Why, this—the affair of salvation," he hesitated—"you know we are told to search the Scriptures."

"I know we are," said I, "but not in your sense. Have you anything more to say?"

"Yea, woman, I have. You are proud of your worldly knowledge,—but you have not learnt to know God and his Christ."

"Indeed!—I am sorry to hear it," I said, beginning to turn over the leaves of my book—"and pray, when am I to have my first lesson?"

He shook his head with a puzzled air. "Ah, sister! you speak as one who has but little relish for the things of God! You sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death!"

"Thank you once more!—you are really quite flattering. Have you got anything more to say, for I cannot listen much longer?"

"You could listen to the priest, that man of Belial, that trader in human souls. Alas! poor dupe of priestcraft and superstition!—why will you close your ears, yea, and your heart, against the sweet words of salvation—why will you turn aside from the living water of the Rock, and quench your thirst with the muddy water—the rotten, filthy water offered by an idolatrous priesthood! I once drank of it myself, as my people did before me, but the good God called me forth from Babylon, and I answered: 'Here I am; Lord, what wilt thou of thy servant?' Since then I have walked in pleasant pastures, by running waters. I have cast off the bridle from my understanding, and rejoice that I am a free man—free in Christ the Lord." I rose suddenly, and he rose too, but manifested no intention to move.

"Be good enough to walk out, sir!" said I, holding the door in my hand, "or I shall be obliged to call for aid. And mark me, Mr. ——, what's your name?"

"My name is Jacques Larue!"

"Well! mark me, Mr. Jacques Larue—an apostate I presume you are!—never, while this house belongs to me,

take the liberty of crossing the threshold again." The fellow glanced around with a sly, mocking expression of countenance that was not at all in keeping with his previous sanctimony. I understood the glance.

"Don't depend on my being alone!" I said, "for if you ever set foot in here again you may find a reception that you will not relish."

By this time the children were coming in to the afternoon school, and my strange visitor was bolting through the door, leaving his Bible behind, whether intentionally or not I, of course, knew not.

"Have the goodness to take that book with you, friend!" I said, pointing to it; "else I might find it stated in the next Missionary Record that you had left it in the hands of the school-teacher of this village, at her own request, and had great hopes therefrom of her spiritual regeneration."

Muttering to himself something about Jezabel, and Popish darkness, he took up his book, and passed out into the street. When once beyond the door, a thought struck him, and turning back with a face of conical intensity—if one may say so—he asked: "Ma'amselle, where did you come from?"

"From a country," I answered, "where the like of you is well known—where the people are all wide awake, and have their eye on wolves who come in sheep's clothing. Excuse me, sir, if I am impolite, but you drew it on yourself in the first place by your most unwarrantable intrusion, and again by your scurrilous attack on my religion and its ministers."

That was the first and last visit I received from Monsieur Jacques Larue. On going into the house, however, I found that he had been there before I saw him, and gave Laure two tracts, one entitled *The True Way to Worship God*, and the other, *Virgin Worship, or Rome Exposed*. The former was in French, the latter in English. Thankful to receive the gift, and little imagining what it really was, the girl had laid the tracts on a shelf till she should find time to read them. Great was her surprise and that of her mother, when I made her take them after the pedlar, who was still in sight, charging her, if he refused to take them, to tear them in pieces before his eyes. The latter she really did, wondering all the time what it meant. When she returned I gave herself and her mother such an explanation of the proselyting system—as far as they could understand it—that I think they will hardly ever open the door to a *colporteur* whether I am out or in.

Next day, when the children came to school, they were all full of the *colporteur*. He had visited almost every house, and many of the girls had a whole budget of news concerning him. In one house he had called the priest a liar, and was belabored by the women with their broom-handles and other such utensils, for his pains. In another place he had been caught by the man of the house urging his doctrine on his *bonne femme* in a way so impressive that it stirred his old Norman blood, and he despatched the pious interloper with a very impious kick on a certain unmentionable part of his *corpus*, threatening still more active measures if he ever showed

his face there again. One little girl, with that mischievous black eye so often found among the Canadian women, (whose *beaux yeux* are so proudly extolled by their admiring countrymen,*) had a laughable story to tell of how she and her three little brothers had frightened away the pedlar by calling their old dog Loup, agreeably to their mother's instructions. How he ran off puffing and blowing; how he dropt his bundle, and dare not return for it for fear of Loup. That was the height of fun, and seemed to tickle the youngsters mightily. This story carried the suffrages of the assembly, and the merriment to which it gave rise was fast growing into anarchy, when my bell restored the little folks to order, and Hermine's story was left standing over for the mid-day recess. In one or two places it appeared that Jacques had succeeded in having a talk on religious subjects, though the story went that he got the worst of it. Travelling on down the street, he met some boys playing just in front of the church, and on them Monsieur Jacques made a dead set as I afterwards learned. The dialogue, it seems, was something in this wise :

"Young boys, come here ; I wish to tell you something that you will like to hear."

Boys gathering round, with ears and eyes wide open :
"What is it about?"

* "Vive la Canadienne, et ses beaux yeux,
Et ses beaux yeux tous doux,
Et ses beaux yeux."

—Chorus of the National Song—

Vive la Canadienne.

"About the beginning of the world—how God made all things."

"Bah! that's nothing new—don't we know all about it?"

"No, you don't."

"I tell you we do. And if that's all the story you have to tell us, we won't listen."

"Well! then, I'll tell you all about the good Saviour—how he came into the world."

"Yes, yes, he was born in a stable on Christmas night, and the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph and the ox and the ass were with him——"

"And his mother wrapped him in swaddling-clothes," interrupted another, "and laid him in the manger. Why, sir, we know it all; even little Paul there, that's only five years old, can tell you all about the Holy Infant Jesus——"

"Yes," said the gaffer alluded to, "if you'll come home with me, I'll show him to you. Mother has him in a crib, and we all pray to him every night and morning."

"Well! well!" said the baffled professor of Christian doctrine, "let me tell you how he died on the cross to save sinners."

This made the boys indignant: "Is it that we don't know that?—why, even the crucifix tells us *that* story. You're a nice man to be calling us from our play to tell us what we all know."

"Poor children!" grunted the pitying pedlar, "you are in darkness, and you don't know it. The priest will not teach you himself, nor let others teach you."

"That's not true," said one of the elder boys, manfully ; " *Monsieur le Curé* has catechism every Sunday. I think he tells us many things that you couldn't tell us. Come along, boys!—who has the ball ? "

The pedlar stopt them again, and began searching his pockets for tracts to give them. " Bah ! where's the use—most of us can't read—besides, the priest says your books are not good. You'd better give them to *Annette La marche* !" This was the woman who made the pedlar's shoulders ache on the previous day ; and the sly piece of irony so disconcerted the devoted Scripture-monger that he took himself off without another word.

On the whole, his visit to St. —— was a dead failure ; yet I was not at all surprised when Lady —— sent me a number of the " Missionary Record " soon after, to see an elaborate account of " the devoted labors of our beloved brother, *Jacques Larue*," in the village of S. B., (evidently meant for ours,) how he conversed with divers persons of both sexes, and, he trusted, implanted the germ of grace in their hearts. He had met with much opposition, and even some abuse, but rejoiced that he was accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, in making His name known to those who knew it not."

I was strongly tempted to write an account of Larue's visit for the benefit of Lady —— and her friends, but on second consideration I came to the conclusion that it would be of no earthly use. How could I make those see who would not choose to see ? The *Record* was, I knew, Gospel, and my annotations would be worse than heresy. Still, I could not help wishing that my kind but

much deceived patroness had been present in my school-room when I questioned the children on the subject of Larue's summary expulsion from the various houses. The answer almost invariably was: "Why, Ma'am-selle, because he spoke bad of the Blessed Virgin. Mother says it would be a sin to listen to him."

"To be sure it would," said another; "wouldn't our Lord be very angry with any one that spoke ill of his Mother? There's Pierre Larocque gave Jean Brousseau a good pounding the other day, because he said his mother was a liar. And doesn't our Lord love his Mother as well as Pierre loves his? Yes, and a great deal better, too, for the Blessed Virgin was far better than any other mother."

It was a great consolation to me to find the entire population of the place so thoroughly devoted to our common patroness, before whose image, in our little quiet church, so many of my hours were happily spent. The faith and piety of the people endeared my retirement more and more to my world-corroded heart, and I daily thanked that divine Son who has given us such a Mother to be our solace in this world of sorrow. Latterly I am more and more drawn to the miraculous Presence ever abiding in the sanctuary. The pale, flickering light of its solitary lamp is as the star of hope to my soul, raising it unconsciously above the things of this world, and, with it in view, I can gaze unmoved even on the heaviest sorrows my heart has known. Well for me that the joys and loves of earth have relaxed their hold upon my heart, for I have heard within the past

year of Alfred's death. Consumption—my mother's fatal legacy—blighted his early manhood, and before he had completed his twenty-fifth year he was called from this world to enter, I trust, upon the joy of his Lord. A year or two ago this would have been a severe affliction, but now I have a sort of melancholy pleasure in the thought that another of our little band is gathered into the heavenly fold. It was Emily who informed me of Alfred's happy passage to eternity, and I believe I caught a portion of her sweetly tranquil resignation. She told me that our brother had fallen asleep in Christ, and asked why we should sorrow. He died as he had lived, for the last few years, honored and esteemed by his brethren in religion for those early virtues which had so soon ripened to their eternal fulness, and clothed in the habit of an illustrious order specially devoted to our dear Redeemer. "Why, then," said Emily again, "should we mourn his early death? Let us rather praise God, my sister, that he obtained grace to fight the good fight, and trample on the vanities of this world! —and let us pray that we too may, each in our respective states, follow his bright example, that, with him and our loved ones gone before, we may enjoy the eternal blessedness of the just made perfect." Still, nature had her rights, and my softened heart was keenly sensible to the feeling of increased loneliness. Often did I retire to a favorite seat under the shade of an old elm by the churchyard wall, and there, alone with the dead, my tears flowed freely for the beloved brother who had so lately joined that shadowy host. Before these natural

and most refreshing tears were dry upon my cheek I had another trial of a most ludicrous kind.

It so happened that for the last twelve months, Mr. Le Comte having been unable to procure a suitable teacher for his male school, I had voluntarily taken charge of all the boys under eight years old, in addition to my own school. The amount of my daily labor was, of course, considerably increased, and, in order to get through with all the lessons, I was, moreover, obliged to keep the school open an hour longer. This I felt the more sensibly, as I have for some months past been much weakened by a distressing pain in my right side.

One day during school-hours I had a visit from the priest, who, after his usual kindly chat with the children, informed me with a smile that he had at length found a male teacher in whose competency he had the utmost confidence. I said I was very glad to hear it.

“So you ought, Mademoiselle, since it will lessen your labor considerably.”

“Oh! I don’t so much mind that, sir, as I do the want of secular instruction on the part of your larger boys, and the great difficulty of finding a really good teacher. When does your gentleman commence his school?”

“Him!—oh! *he* is ready any time, if we can only agree upon the terms!” he added, with a smile that rather puzzled me; but I made no remark, and there the matter ended.

Next day, just as I had dismissed my noisy little flock, and was preparing for a quiet stroll in the com-

pany of quaint old Geoffrey Chaucer, my egress was impeded by the sudden apparition of a living *fac-simile* of that venerable individual, as my imagination loves to portray him—old almost to decrepitude, yet not decrepit, notwithstanding the “shrunken shanks” which seemed to bend beneath the weight of the body, frail as that was—a countenance that might be called fresh, when compared with the rest of the body, and an eye still full of intelligence, keen and observant. This, with the appropriate finish of some gray elf-locks falling from under a large, old-fashioned, quaker-like hat, was the picture that now occupied my doorway. There was no going out now, I clearly saw, for the visitor was no less a person than the Seigneur’s *younger* brother, Mr. Edouard, as the villagers called him. *Uncle Ned* he would have been in another country.

“Good-evening, Ma’amselle,” said the cheerful and somewhat polished old man; “you were going out, I perceive.”

“Oh! that is of no consequence, Mr. Edouard,” I said, “your visit does me honor. Pray be seated.” He was seated accordingly.

“Good-evening, Mother Longpré,” he next said; “always busy, I see!”

“Why, yes, sir; there’s nothing to be made of idleness. I’m glad to see you down so far, Mr. Edouard. How’s the rheumatism, sir?”

“Pooh! pooh! it’s gone long ago—quite gone. I haven’t pain or ache now, thank God!”

“Indeed, I’m glad to hear it, sir!—sure enough, you

do stand it well for a man of your age. I think it's growing young you are!"

For some reason or other this compliment had a contrary effect to that projected by the old woman. Mr. Edouard took her up very shortly.

"Why to hear *you*, Mother Longpré, one would think I was very old indeed!"

"Well! you're not very young, I know for certain, Mr. Edouard. But I meant no harm, sir, I assure you. Ma'amselle! I'm going to milk the cow—will you please to mind that bread in the oven till I come back?"

The old gentleman was evidently well pleased at her departure, and fearing, I suppose, her too speedy return, proceeded at once to business.

"Has Monsieur le Curé told you, mademoiselle, that I am going to take charge of his school?"

This was really a surprise, and I answered very quickly: "Why, no, Mr. Edouard—he told me he had found a first-rate teacher, or something to that effect, but he did not mention your name. How can you possibly think of such a thing—with your attainments, and—" I was going to say "at your time of life," but I had profited too well by the little dialogue with Ma'am Longpré, and stopped just in time. "Surely," I said, "the salary is no object to you."

"Not the smallest, my dear young lady, I do assure you. It is the prospect of doing good, of devoting my time to children of whom I am so fond, and—" he paused, coughed slightly, and looked at me. Seeing me, I suppose, perfectly calm and unconscious, the old fel-

low went on, though with some embarrassment, which, at the moment, I could by no means understand.

"I am fond of society, Mademoiselle —"

"So I have always observed," said I, very much puzzled by this remark; "fortunately, you have so large a circle within your brother's family that you have no need to seek society beyond it."

"Ah! you are mistaken, Mademoiselle!—I do not mean that society—no!—no!—I had always heard the vicar say that you were very lonely here, so far away from your friends and country, and—and—" he again hesitated, and this time I felt rather awkward myself—"in short, you always seemed to relish *my* company, (so I had, on account of his quaintly *unique* character and appearance,) so I thought we might just make a match of it, and, living here nicely together, you teach the girls and I the boys!" He wheezed out a long breath when he had thus delivered himself, and seemed much relieved.

I can hardly say whether I was most inclined to laugh or cry, when I asked myself the question, "Has it come to this with me?" I felt as though the old Adam was urging me to resent what pride represented as an insult; but my sober judgment dictated a more prudent course, and I burst into a hearty laugh, affecting to treat the proposal as a joke.

"Well, really, Mr. Edouard," said I, "I never gave you credit for so much drollery: you act your part to the very life, and have made a capital joke of it. I am very glad, however, that neither Ma'am Longpré nor her

daughter happened to hear you, for they must really have thought you quite serious, and that, you know, woudl have made you so very ridiculous! But, indeed, I owe you many thanks, for I was in a very pensive mood when you came in, and your droll conceit has given me such a laugh as will do me good." The old man's countenance fell, and he looked quite abashed.

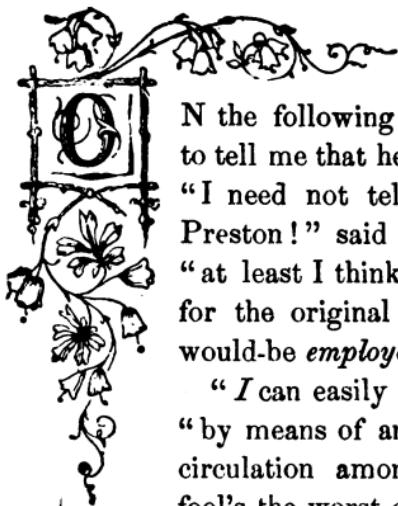
"But, mademoiselle," he stammered out, "you are again mistaken. I don't see anything so very ridiculous——"

Luckily I just then heard old Marie's foot on the path without, and I eagerly interrupted him. "For pity's sake, not a word more, sir—I would not on any account that such an absurd idea should get abroad, even in jest. Be composed, I beg of you, for here comes Mother Longpré, who has got very sharp eyes of her own."

During the remainder of the visit, I managed so that Marie never left the room, seeing which, and inferring from my manner that he had not the ghost of a chance, the fanciful old dotard soon removed himself from my presence, to my no small relief; for as long as he stayed I felt myself under a very painful restraint.



CHAPTER X.



N the following day, Mr. Le Comte came to tell me that he had lost his male teacher. "I need not tell you how or why, Miss Preston!" said he, with his calm smile, "at least I think so. But how to account for the original plan on the part of our would-be *employé*—that is the point!"

"I can easily account for it, sir," said I, "by means of an old proverb in common circulation among us at home—'an old fool's the worst of any.'"

"Good!" said the priest, "very good, indeed! I should be sorry, however, to have you say so before our poor old friend, for he is really a good man—simple as a child, and guileless, too."

"I have no doubt of it, sir," I replied, "but I think at his time of life he ought to mind his prayers and begin to wean himself from the world, instead of indulging in idle vagaries."

"You are right, my child, quite right," said the good

vicar, with a sudden change of manner, fixing his eyes thoughtfully on the blue water before us ; "when our life *may*, at any moment, and *must*, in a few short years, merge in the shoreless gulf of eternity, why should we, any of us, as you say, indulge in idle vagaries ? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity ! "

One Sunday, about a month after, when the priest commenced publishing the bans, the first on the list was : "between Edouard Garneau, son of deceased René Garneau, and deceased Angèle Thessier, of this parish, on the one part, and Therèse Dumont, daughter of Michel Jobin and Rose Carron, of the parish of St. —— on the other."

So great a sensation did this *ban* produce among the congregation, that I think there was little attention paid to the others. Mr. Edouard was decidedly one of the oldest men in the parish, and might reasonably be the grandfather of Therèse Dumont, who was hardly out of her teens, and, moreover, one of the prettiest girls in the two parishes. For my part, I was amused but not surprised. I saw at a glance that the self-conceited old bachelor being wofully mortified by the manner of my refusal as well as the refusal itself, and had made up his mind to let me see that he could get a wife any day both younger and prettier than I. As for the girl herself, it was a great *uprise* for her, she being only the daughter of a *very* small farmer, who found it hard enough to make all ends meet, being burdened with a young and numerous family. So, of course, Therèse and her parents were delighted with the prospect of her

marrying it to the Garneau family, and it probably never once occurred to the giddy and light hearted girl that she was making a sacrifice. The gain she thought, was all hers, the condescension old Edouard's. Happy state of insensibility! may it continue through life—it may, in such a disposition as that of Therèse.

The secret of Mr. Edouard's matrimonial speculations was only known, however, to the priest and myself. To the rest of the congregation it was the wonder of the day, and, to say the truth, Therèse's singular good fortune was much more talked of than even the astonishing disparity of years. The burden of the old song was quite lost sight of, if it were ever heard of in that locality, and people seemed to think that in defiance of its axiom: "May and December *can*" sometimes "agree."

Mr. Le Comte told me next time I saw him that he had earnestly remonstrated with the old man on his strange project, but all to no purpose—married he would and should be. He was his own master, he hoped, and he saw no reason why he should not have a wife as well as anybody else.

On the Sunday following the marriage, just as I was leaving my own door, prayer-book in hand, going to Grand Mass, who should rattle past me in a calèche but Mr. Edouard and his bride, the latter in the full glory of her bridal costume, white veil, white ribbons, and some very whitish shawl. I affected not to notice who were passing, but the spruce old bridegroom was determined that I *should* notice them.

"Good-day, ma'amselle, good-day," said he, with a

very animated air, a very patronizing bow, and quite an exulting smile. I could hardly keep from laughing in his face; but the pretty bride turned her face full on me, and it was so bright, so full of the childish vanity attending on her new position, that I could not bear to laugh at her old man, lest it might in any degree lessen her girlish triumph. So I smiled and bowed and returned the "good-day," with the easiest possible air of good-humor, and on the calèche rolled to astonish others of the natives. I rather think, however, that the old gentleman's mortification was not small on finding me take the matter so coolly. I suppose he thought I should have been grievously piqued—poor, simple old man!

Somewhat the affair reminded me, however, of my poor Aunt Kate and the practical joke played upon her and "honest Tom," by the most illustrious of wags—so many years before. It was the signal for a host of half buried recollections to start into sudden life.

"Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise!"

As I took my solitary walk that evening by the river's bank, I involuntarily began to review the leading events of my past life. They were all before me "in varied sheen bedight," and as I retraced the several periods when so many of my friends and acquaintances had disappeared from my view in "the waves of time," leaving me a stranger and *alone* on the opposite side of the earth, I could almost fancy that the past was but a wild, changeful dream. "No, Elinor Preston!" said I, within myself, "those pictures from which you at times lift

the veil for your private contemplation, they are not—cannot be real; you never *had* a family circle—you never lived in a world of mirth and gayety—the haunts of fashion you never knew—the scenes of old renown and the romantic beauties of distant lands you must have seen but in dreams—and the living, loving hearts who made even joy more dear—they, too, were creatures of the imagination. There's no use keeping up the delusion longer—you never had an Aunt Kate. You must have had a father and mother—that's plain—but, bless you! they weren't what you fancy them at this distance of time. George, and Alfred, and Carry, and even Emily, are all visionary personages, just as unreal to you as the stout old Baron of '41, of whom your childhood heard so much. Even Shaugh, staunch and sturdy, and humorous as you represent him to yourself, was but a puppet like the rest, strutting his little hour on the dreamy stage of your past life.” Amused at this strange freak of fancy, I yet asked myself, “Is there not sound philosophy in it after all—what is *the past* but a dream to any of us?” The thought was mournful but not painful. Mechanically I had taken the path that led to the churchyard, and, opening the little gate, I walked in, murmurings to myself those words of Scott:

“Time rolls his ceaseless course! the race of yore
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends hoar
Of their strange ventures, happ'd by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!”

"Here at least and at last is reality!" I thought, as I looked around at the little grassy hillocks where

"Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

"If life be as the poet tells us 'all but a dream at the best,' here it is that the dream ends, and how little should I, for one, care how soon I pass into the world of spirits, where the kindly hearts that alone bound me to this vale of tears almost all await me. I am calm and tranquil now, but not happy;—oh, no! for the void that we all feel within us—the craving for some future good—is in me painfully sensible. I have ceased to dwell upon the past, and begin to live in the future. I wonder how Emily feels, or does she in any degree share my feelings. Oh! if I only had her here, I think I could be happy—but this utter isolation is overwhelming to my heart, and makes me long for the world beyond the grave where I may humbly hope to enjoy for ever the glorious vision of God and His saints. May I find among them all I have lost!"

Just then I heard the shrill voice of Mother Longpré calling me at the gate, which she held open. "There's another reality," said I to myself; "no dream could produce that!" I went to her immediately, and received a severe reprimand for sitting out under the dew.

"It's a nice place for you, too," said she, "moping there in the graveyard, and it near dark. If you got a good fright once for all there it would serve you, I think. Don't you know very well that the ghosts must be in it as thick as the grass?"

"I am not afraid of them, Marie! I never injured any of them, and why should they injure *me*?"

"Well! I don't say they would injure you, ma'amselle, for, with God's help, they all got Christian burial, and died at peace with the world; but what of that—the very sight of a spirit would be enough to kill one."

"I don't know that, Marie!" I said with a smile; "I think there are some spirits in the other world that I should be very glad to see. And, besides, I don't know how soon I may be a ghost myself. If I were, would you be afraid of me?" I smiled, but not so Mother Longpré. She moved instinctively a step or two further away, and as I eyed her askance I could see even by the dim twilight that her old wrinkled face changed color.

"Afraid of you!" she repeated; "well! I can't say—I don't know but I might—but for God's sake, don't be jesting about such things."

"I am not jesting, Marie—I really intend to die some day!"

"Well! mind, if you do walk about when you're dead, you're not to appear to me. Now sure you won't, ma'amselle? To tell you the truth, I think you *are* in a fair way for your long journey, unless you give up this strange habit of moping about all alone in the evenings. I declare, you look for all the world like a ghost at this present moment!" I did, too, for the love of fun flashing up within me with a fitful glare, I lengthened my face to the very utmost, and slowly turned my eyes towards her, then fixed them on her face with a most ca-

daverous stare. The effect was magical. Old Marie took to her heels, muttering "Christ save us!" and ran as fast as her trembling limbs could carry her to the house, where I found Laure fanning her with a newspaper when I went in. I had laughed heartily at the comical result of my trick—it was but a gesture after all—and I was still laughing when I got in; but the old woman was in no laughing humor, and as soon as she could get breath to speak, she cried out:

"Never do the like of that again, miss!—don't now—for mocking's catching!—it's fine fun for the like of you to frighten old people, and play ghost, and all that, but I tell you again, death is not to be played with! Mind that now!"

"Why, Marie," I expostulated, "how did *I* play ghost?—I only looked at you, and off you scampered as though there was a whole troop of them after you! I wish you had seen her, Laure!" The daughter laughed, but the mother was no way disposed for mirth.

"Looked at me, indeed!" she cried, "but what sort of a look was it? Nobody in the world could tell you from a real spirit—the Lord save us!"

"You must know, ma'amselle," said Laure, very gravely, "that my poor mother *saw* a real ghost a little before we came to *you*."

"Is it possible, Laure,—what kind of a ghost was it?"

"She'll tell you herself, ma'amselle," said Laure, drawing back behind her mother's chair to indulge in a low titter, throwing me a significant glance at the same time.

"Ah! you villain," said the mother, laughing herself at the recollection; "that was the funny ghost. It was a fine summer night, ma'amselle, that it took on to frighten me, and a fearful looking thing it was, with its winding-sheet wrapped about it, and everything as deathly as could be; but after it had the life and soul frightened in me, walking up and down before the door, and round the end of the house, didn't I catch my lady here giving it a drink of water through the back window, and it wiping its face as natural as life with a pocket-handkerchief, however it got such a thing in the grave!"

"Now, mother, what a shame for you to talk so," and Laure bent her now blushing face over a pot that was boiling on the stove; "what can ma'amselle think?"

"She may think what she likes," said the old woman, winking at me; "it's a chance if she doesn't hear that very ghost *called* to be married some of these fine Sundays to as lively a girl as any in the parish. I hope you'll not dip your head in that boiler, *mignonne*?—or are you looking in it for something you've lost?"

"I want to see if the beets are done, mother; I think they are. Just you come here and take them up, till I run down to Belair's for some vinegar."

"Take care of that ghost, Laure!" I whispered, as the girl passed me; "I suppose it's Edmond!"

"You can guess well, ma'amselle!" was the laughing answer in the same tone, and after a glance at her pretty dark face in the little hanging mirror, she tripped lightly away humming "*La Claire Fontaine*."

My heart was lighter that evening than I had felt it

for months long, and as I sat at my work after tea I caught myself singing "The Young May Moon," glancing ever and anon at the fair planet then "beaming" on me through the opposite window. It was the gleam of sunshine breaking through the darkness of a wintry day, followed closely by the thunder crash and the drifting storm.

Next day Mr. Le Comte brought me a letter which he had found at the post-office for me. It was from Ireland—had the Dublin postmark, and the ominous black seal. It was from the Superior of Cabra Convent, announcing Emily's death. The blow was, at first, overwhelming, and covering my face with my hands, I sank back in my chair in wordless and tearless anguish. After waiting a few moments, the good priest began to console me, but to his great surprise I looked at him with a ghastly smile, and told him he was very kind but that I needed no consolation.

"I astonish you, father, but it is true—I am glad *now*—now that the pang is passed. The earthly tie is broken, and my spirit is free to soar upwards to the regions of eternal day. Oh yes! I am glad—glad that Emily, too, is gone before me!"

The priest was evidently at a loss to understand me; and seeing me so composed, he soon took his leave, whereupon I hastened to the church, and, gliding into my favorite nook, poured forth my soul in prayer. Oh! the luxury of finding one's self *alone* at such a moment in the hushed silence of God's holy house, with only Him, our Father, Brother, Friend for a witness, sure of

finding in that divine Heart sympathy and consolation.

Another year has past away since *she* vanished from the stage of life—

“The last of that bright band.”

I have applied myself since then to win the love of the little flock who are my daily companions; and I think I have succeeded. I feel that my “presence” is, to them, “a blessing,” and that I have power to make them happy. In my walks around the village they follow or meet me with little offerings of wild flowers, or some such simple token—their fathers and mothers have always a pleasant smile, a nod, or a curtsey for *ma’amselle*. Even the very dogs have learned to love me; they never bark at me now, as I pass, but wag their tails and fawn on me, and even their affection is not to be despised. It is, at least, sincere. True, they have none of them shared my fortunes—there is no “Old Dog Tray” among them—there may be for others, but not for me—yet still I value the mute caresses of the faithful animals who are so susceptible of kindness, so grateful, and so honest.

I have reached the grand climacteric of woman’s life—nay, I have passed it by a year or two, and the little hanging mirror begins to warn me that

“Youth and bloom are over.”

The features are still youthful, but the buoyancy of spirit that animated them is fled for ever. I seldom smile now-a-days, and yet I am not sad—it is that the sun-

shine of my heart is utterly faded, never again to beam in this world.

Old Marie peevishly declares that I do not eat enough to keep the life in me, and good Ma'amselle Le Comte has been making me sundry decoctions of herbs. The priest shakes his head, and tells me very seriously that I ought to have medical advice, but they are all mistaken—I feel neither pain nor ache—what need have I then of a doctor? If it be true that my life be ebbing fast away, why, what of it? May I not console *myself* with the exquisite words of the old Scottish ballad—since I have neither *Jean* nor *Jock* to exhort to patience and resignation?

“I’m wearin’ awa, Jean,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, Jean,
I’m wearin’ awa
To the land o’ the leal.

“There’s nae sorrow there, Jean,
There’s neither cauld nor care, Jean,
The day is aye fair
I the land o’ the leal.”

Suppose I were to substitute *Nell* for *Jean*, it would just be the echo of my own heart—thanks, thanks, “Harp of the North!” for this sweetly tender lay, “flung down the fitful breeze” from the hand of some nameless “child of song” for the solace of many a weary heart throughout all coming time.

A few more months have glided on, and I believe I *am* nearing that final *bourne* whence travellers are said never to return. I have written farewell letters—not sad ones, however—to Maria Dillon, and to my kind

friend Lady ——, who is now in Scotland. I have pointed out to Mr. Le Comte the spot where my grave is to be made, and I have told him to give my little effects to Mother Longpré, whose daughter married *the ghost*, as the old woman still calls him, some five or six months ago. The few valuables which I yet retain our worthy pastor is to sell for the benefit of my soul.

Reader, I will now bid *you* farewell. I know not whether I have been able to interest you in my wayward fortunes, yet somehow I feel as though we were old acquaintances, and I should like to have left a favorable impression on your mind now that we are about to part company. You will not, I trust, blame me, because my story is rather a sad one—the fault, be assured, is not mine; none of us would have our lives sombre or cheerless if we could possibly help it, and as for me, my nature was once only too sanguine, too hopeful—even to the last, there was at bottom, a thick *stratum* (as geologists would say) of cheerfulness—I had almost said, *gayety*. But circumstances “nipped” my humor “i’ the bud”—blighted the fair promise of earlier years, and wrapped my whole being in mist and cloud. Farewell, reader, a long farewell!



CONCLUSION.

From the worthy pastor, I had an account of Miss Preston's happy death—how the clouds of which she spoke had all vanished in the final hour, and given place to the brightness of faith and hope—how the young maidens of the village, clad in white, followed their beloved teacher to the grave in long procession, chanting the beautiful Litany of Loretto—how the coffin was borne by four young men chosen by lot from among the many who desired the honor—how the wreath of white roses was laid on the coffin, emblematic of the spotless purity of the early dead, and how, for many days after the funeral, fresh flowers were strewed on her grave by the children whom in life she loved so well.

Such was the record of Miss Preston's life traced by her own hand ; and I know not how it may be with others, but for me it had a strange charm. The varied scenes amid which her life flowed on—the striking contrasts in which it abounded—the mystery which at first overhung the pages, clearing gradually away before my eyes as I read, until at length I felt as though I had really known the *Elinor Preston*, whose “simple story” I had been perusing. Whether you will thank me for making you

acquainted with her I am sure I cannot tell, but, in any case, you will not *say* the contrary, whatever you may *think*—for I know readers in general are very polite and very *courteous*—proverbially so, indeed—and my heroine's misfortunes, if nothing else, entitle her to your respect.

In conclusion, it may be well to mention that old Mother Longpré has actually been on the look-out ever since Miss Preston's death. She is now engaged superintending the primary education of a chubby little grandchild, who, under her experienced tuition, will soon be able to use his legs. She has a wholesome horror of being out after nightfall, and thinks “poor dear ma'amselle” *may* probably take an occasional airing in the vicinity of her present dwelling. Still she derives a sort of faint security from her promise not to appear to *her*: only for that, she says, God knows how it would be, for the poor young lady had such odd ways with her at times, that she must have had something on her mind and it wouldn't be much wonder if she came wandering back in search of relief.

This was old Marie's private opinion, but in public she agreed with all the neighbors that if ma'amselle wasn't in heaven it was a pity of those she left behind—a form of encomium common, I believe, to all Catholic populations, when the recent dead are in question.

THE END.

